A qualitative exploration of the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering for migrants.

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Community Academic Research Links
in collaboration with

Cork Volunteer Centre.

CARL COMMUNITY - ACADEMIC RESEARCH LINKS

University College Cork, Ireland

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Acknowledgements:

Declaration:

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Title of Dissertation:

"A qualitative exploration of the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering for migrants."

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I declare that the content of this dissertation is all my own work. Where the work of others has been used to argument my research, it has been referred to accordingly.

Signed: Nichola Dressel   Date: 30th April 2020.

Definitions:

Asylum Seeker – "An asylum seeker is a person who has fled from his or her country due to fear of persecution and has applied for (legal and physical) protection in another country, but has not yet had their claim for protection assessed. A person remains an asylum seeker until their protection status has been determined" (UNHCR, 2019).

Immigrant – "A person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country" (Hawker, 2011, p.343).

Migrant - "An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons" (International Organisation for Migration, (IOM) 2019). There are many different types of migrants, for example, economic/labour migrants, environmental migrants, political migrants, migrants through family reunion.

Refugee – "A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so" (UNHCR, 2019).

Volunteering – "The commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes. Voluntary activities are undertaken of a person's own free will, without payment (except for the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses)" (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 2000, p.83).

Acronyms and Abbreviations:

AVSO	Association of Voluntary Service Organisations
CARL	Community Active Research Link
CEV	Centre European du Voluntariat
CFI	Call For Input
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CVC	Cork Volunteer Centre
DJE	Department of Justice and Equality
DP	Direct Provision
DPD	Direct Provision and Dispersal system
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
DSFA	Department of Social and Family Affairs
EEA	European Economic Area
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
EU	European Union
HEA	Higher Education Authority
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
IHREC	International Human Rights and Equality Commission
INIS	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPO	International Protection Office
KOF	Swiss Economic Institute (Konjunkturforschungsstelle).
NCVO	National Council of Voluntary Organisations (England).
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NESF	National and Economic Social Forum
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PERMA	Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Mahatma Ghandi.

1.1 Title:

"A qualitative exploration of the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering for migrants."

1.2 Introduction:

This chapter will introduce the reader to the research by providing a background to the research that will be conducted and the rationale to completing this type of research. It will briefly discuss the research aims and objectives and will present the research questions. The purpose of the study is to highlight the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering for migrants using a qualitative approach. This study will aim to build upon existing research, on the benefits of volunteering. This study will aim to highlight the gap in research in relation to the barriers to volunteering for migrants in Ireland.

1.2.1   Cork Volunteer Centre History

The research is being carried out as part of a community-based participatory CARL project in collaboration with the Cork Volunteer Centre. The Cork Volunteer Centre (CVC) was established in 2001. CVC is one of a network of 21 Volunteer Centres and 6 Volunteer Information Services across Ireland. Their network is supported by Volunteer Ireland, the National Development Agency in Ireland. CVC is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development. CVC offers a range of supports to both volunteers and non-profit organisations such as; information, consultation, Garda vetting administration and volunteer management training. For individuals who would like to volunteer CVC helps to match individuals with non-profit organisations through their placement services. Currently CVC has 9,391 volunteers, made up of 5725 Irish volunteers and 3,666 non-Irish national volunteers.

1.3 Background:

Recent research (Mui et al. 2012; Volunteer Ireland, 2017), shows that volunteering can have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the volunteer. Some elements of well-

being are, the ability to participate in society and the importance of the individual's sense of purpose (National Economic and Social Council, 2009). Dr. Martin Seligman introduced the idea of the PERMA model of wellbeing within positive psychology, using five components to create the acronym. Seligman's (2011, pp. 16-25) "PERMA model of well-being consists of; Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment." Partaking in volunteering can build upon each of these components of PERMA in order to enhance wellbeing. The literature also highlights how volunteering has been proven to be a good tool for social inclusion (Volunteer Ireland, 2015) and could be considered an effective way for migrants to integrate into their community. Immigrants are faced with various challenges when they move to a new country. Examples of these challenges are "language and cultural barriers, discrimination, and other unjust conditions, which limit their opportunities for a successful experience" (Handy & Greenspan 2009, cited in Taurini et al. 2017, p.32). Successful integration can be complicated by these language barriers, or other issues such as housing, no income or low income and a lack of social supports (Wood et. al., 2019; OECD, 2018). The volunteering experiences of migrants are absent from many studies on volunteering, especially here in Ireland. This study aims to address the gap in the literature in Ireland. Volunteer Ireland (2017) highlights how 37% of those registered were migrants and overseas visitors, it is therefore, worthwhile to investigate the barriers to volunteering and build on the existing knowledge of the benefits of volunteering by including this marginalised group in Irish society.

1.4 Rationale:

This type of research is meaningful to me as I spent fourteen weeks on placement with Nasc, Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre in Cork city. My work was predominantly with asylum seekers and refugees, many of whom lived in Direct Provision centres. Some of the asylum seekers I worked with, struggled on a daily basis with not being able to work. While on placement, I assisted asylum seekers in sourcing voluntary work, and I saw the positive impact it had on their mental health. When I saw that 'The Cork Volunteer Centre' was seeking a piece of research in relation to the benefits and barriers of volunteering to marginalised groups, I knew that I wanted to become involved in this research. It is important to me as I saw first-hand the negative impact not working had on migrants, their mental health and wellbeing.

According to Kuhling and Keohane (2007, p.1) Ireland has experienced "major social and cultural changes" where it has become more "liberalised and cosmopolitanised" or

globalised since the 1990's. Ireland is now considered the second most globalised country in the world (KOF Swiss Economic Institute, 2019). "Migration is part and parcel of a global process with immigrants described as 'the visible faces of globalisation'" (Penninx et al, 2004, cited in Ní Chonaill, 2009, p.1). "Net migration into Ireland has been increasing, and has overtaken emigration levels" (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007, p.52). The reversal of emigration contributes to Ireland's modern multi-cultural society. While migration in to Ireland is not a new concept, the 2016 Census highlights a high level of migration into Ireland, with non-Irish nationals making up 11.6% of the population. According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO 2016) "there were 535,475 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland in April 2016."

Worldwide we are also witnessing the highest record number of displaced people. "An unprecedented 70.8 million people around the world have been forced from home" (UNHCR, 2019). The number of people seeking asylum and refugee status has increased significantly worldwide. Many asylum seekers come to Ireland seeking refuge, in the hopes of a better life, free from conflict or persecution. However, asylum seekers could be considered one of the most excluded and marginalised groups in Ireland (Social Justice Ireland, 2019). Asylum seekers are already vulnerable when they arrive in a foreign country often without knowledge of the language spoken. This is then complicated further by poor living conditions, poverty and a lack of social supports. Furthermore, this can lead to mental health issues, stress, anxiety and other issues which can be exacerbated by their inability to integrate successfully. While new laws in Ireland state that Asylum seekers are eligible to work after 9 months, they must still await a first decision from the International Protection Office (IPO) before this becomes possible in practice. This excludes many asylum seekers from the workforce.

Social work increasingly finds itself at the frontline of issues pertaining to immigrant and refugee settlement and integration. Social work practices will come under increasing pressure in dealing with poverty, mental health issues, disempowerment and uncertainty about the future of these immigrants. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2014), states that social work is a profession that promotes "social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing." With the knowledge that volunteering is beneficial to volunteers and organisations, social workers could benefit from this type of research in order to promote this type of work to migrants/asylum seekers in order to enhance their wellbeing and promote integration into Irish society.

Ireland could now be considered a multi-cultural society and in this context of increased diversity, 'The Migrant Integration Strategy' (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017) was developed as the Government's response to the challenge of promoting integration. As part of

this strategy the Government states that "Volunteering will be promoted among the less well represented groups". This research will help to highlight barriers to volunteering for migrants and enable migrants to participate on an equal basis to those of Irish heritage, by creating an awareness of these barriers. This is turn will enhance the opportunity of completing the Government's proposal to promote volunteering among the less well represented groups.

1.5 Research Aims:

This study is a community-based participatory CARL project in collaboration with the Cork Volunteer Centre. The Cork Volunteer Centre highlighted the need for this research as many of their clientele are non-Irish nationals. The aim of this research study is to gain an insight into what the potential barriers and opportunities are for migrants in obtaining and partaking in voluntary work. The study will highlight these barriers and opportunities for migrants with the intention of imparting the knowledge gained from the study to Voluntary and Community organisations, in order to ameliorate the barriers to volunteering for migrants.

1.6 Theoretical Framework:

The research is an empirical piece of research which came about due to the researcher's interest in voluntary work and previous experience working with migrants. This is a qualitative piece of research that values lived experience. It is believed that a qualitative piece of research is the best method to use for the purposes of answering the research questions. This will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3 Methodology. While there is no theoretical framework per se, the research is being carried out with cognisance to Seligman's PERMA model (2011), in an attempt to ascertain what the data shows about 'Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishments' with respect to the experiences of the participants interviewed.

1.7 Research Objectives:

The objectives of this research were to complete a review of relevant Irish and international literature in order to inform the researcher of possible benefits of and barriers to volunteering for migrants. The objectives of this research were to build upon existing literature and highlight any gaps in the literature by conducting semi-structured interviews with five migrants, who are currently in or have completed a volunteering role. Therefore, this research

explores such benefits of voluntary work on migrants and also explores some of the barriers that prevent them from partaking in voluntary work, from the migrants' perspectives.

1.8 Research Questions:

The following research questions were deemed to be conducive to guiding the objective and answer the overall aim of the research.

1. *Are there benefits to volunteering for migrants?*
2. *Are there barriers to volunteering for migrants?*
3. *What from the perspective of migrants who are volunteering or who have volunteered in Ireland, can Community / Voluntary organisations do to lessen the impact of these barriers?*

1.9 Summary of the research approach:

The topic was decided in consultation with Cork Volunteer Centre. This was a community participatory research project. A qualitative approach in the form of semi-structured interviews was deemed the most appropriate way to garner the information. The data was then thematically analysed by categorising four main themes and several sub-themes to give a clear analysis.

1.10 Conclusion:

This chapter has set the stage for the following chapters. It has provided a background as to how the research has emerged. Chapter two consists of the Literature Review, providing insight into the topic of volunteering in Ireland and a discussion on the benefits and barriers to volunteering for migrants. Chapter three, illustrates the research methods and methodologies that were utilised during the research process and also highlights some limitations to the research study. Chapter four, presents the findings to the research. Finally, chapter five will conclude the study, and will include recommendations that emerge from the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction:

The community research partner, Cork Volunteer Centre (CVC), identified how almost one third of their volunteers were non-Irish nationals. Therefore, it was considered a useful topic of research to question the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering for migrants. Consequentially, after completing a social work placement in Nasc, Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre in Cork, the researcher was intrigued as to the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering for migrants. Following on from a consultation with CVC, it was decided that the researcher would pursue this area of interest.

Therefore, this chapter introduces the relevant literature to the research. This chapter will look at the historical context and the trends of volunteering in Ireland. Literature from an international and domestic perspective will be examined in relation to volunteering. Finally, this chapter will also aim to identify any gaps in the literature in relation to the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering for migrants.

2.2 History of Volunteering:

Ireland has always had a strong culture of volunteering. Over a quarter of the population, 28.4% or 1 million adults in Ireland volunteer (CSO, 2015). Ireland's "long tradition of voluntary activity and charitable service, has been shaped by religious, political and economic developments" (European Union (EU) 2010, p.1). Ireland's background in volunteering or 'caritas'[i] dates back to medieval times, and has been dominated by religious orders and the Catholic Church, who provided shelter for the sick and homeless and also provided social welfare services up to the 60's. Some of these religious organisations are still in existence today such as 'St. Vincent de Paul' (EU, 2010).

Community development also played a vital role in influencing the historical development of volunteering in Ireland with the introduction of the co-operative movement 'Muintir na Tíre'[ii] in 1937. This type of community development is "a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with the fullest possible reliance upon the communities own initiative" (Muintir.ie, 2020). In respect to the Community and Voluntary sector, the role of religious organisations changed around the 70's,

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[i] Christian love of humankind; charity.
[ii] The national organisation promoting community development in Ireland (1937).

creating gaps that needed to be filled. (Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), 2000). These changes are highlighted by the increase in state support for the voluntary sector in a range of services delivered to communities such as education and social services.

"The past twenty years have seen the development and evolution of a volunteering infrastructure underpinned by central government policy and strategy initiatives seeking to address the challenges of changing demographics, societal structures and regulatory environment" (DRCD, 2019, p.9). While there is no specific legislation in Ireland, that exclusively covers volunteers, there are policies that "support the development of volunteerism" (Association of Voluntary Services Organisation (ASVO) & Centre European du Voluntariat (CEV) Project, 2005, p.4). The Government's 'White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector' was also the first time that volunteering was defined in any official documentation. (Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA), 2000). There have been various reports on volunteering, such as 'Tipping the Balance'[iii] (2002) and the 'Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship'[iv] (2007) which have informed the DRCD in developing a draft National Strategy in Volunteering (2020-2025). This strategy will "set a direction for volunteering, volunteering infrastructure, volunteering involving organisations, volunteering supports and the volunteer" (DRCD, 2019, p.10). However, this has yet to be finalised and approved by the Government. The next section will look at the trends in volunteering in Ireland, which reiterates the need for a National Strategy in Volunteering.

2.2.1 Trends in Volunteering:

In order to highlight current trends in volunteering, the researcher looked at various studies conducted over the last two decades. Prior to 1992, there appears to be limited data on the percentage of people who volunteered in Ireland. According to research by Ruddle and O' Connor (1993) and Ruddle and Mulvihill (1995, 1999) the national data on volunteering highlights a decrease in numbers of those who volunteered from 38.9% to 33.3% between 1992 and 1998 (See Figure 1). Data from the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF), (2003) and statistics from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), (2017) provide the remaining statistics.

[iii] The 2002 report of the National Committee on Volunteering, which highlights the diversity of organisational forms of volunteering.

[iv] Volunteering through the community and voluntary sector forms an important part of active citizenship.
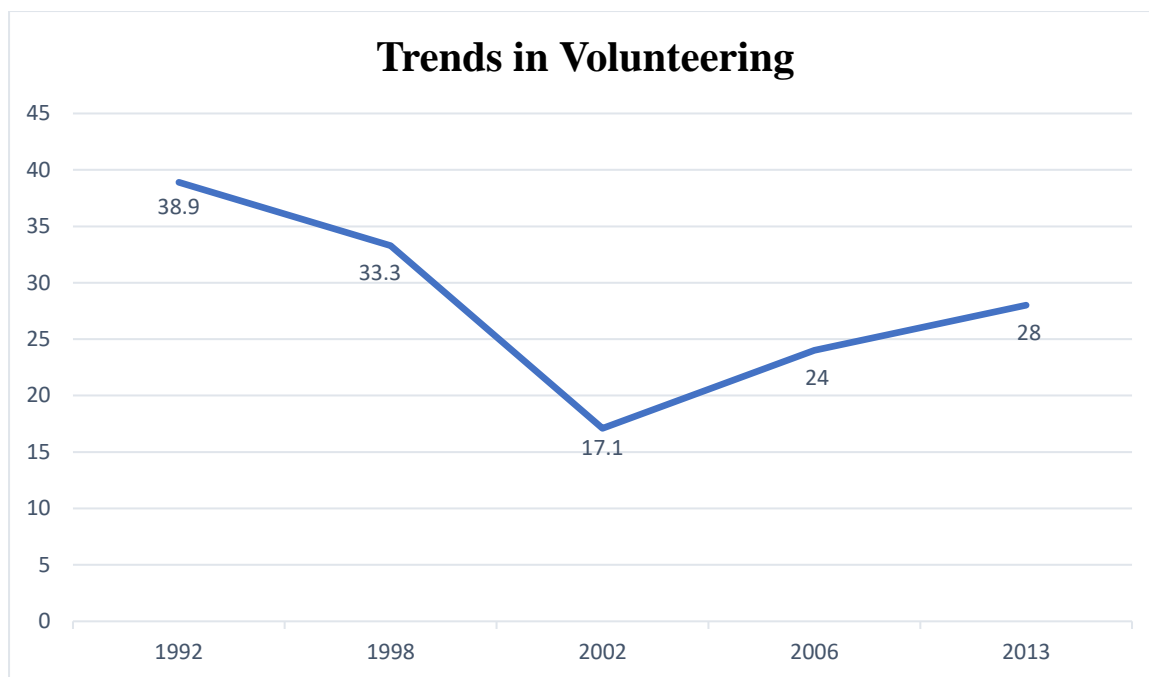
Figure 1: Percentage of people who volunteered in Ireland between 1992-2013.

It is interesting to note that while volunteering declined to 17.1% in 2002, it is gradually increasing. A 2010 EU study on volunteering highlights that "A major trend in volunteering has been linked with the rapidly changing demography of Ireland with increasing numbers of people from immigrant communities coming forward as volunteers" (European Union (EU), 2010, p.3). This is in keeping with the increase of immigrants into Ireland over the last decade. Another trend noted by the study is how the impact of the recession of 2008 has led to a rise in the number of people registering to volunteer (EU, 2010). With the recession also came an increase in unemployment in Ireland. Interestingly, this leads the researcher into the next section which discusses the impact unemployment can have on people, especially some migrants, who under Irish legislation are not entitled to work.

2.3 Unemployment and Access to the Labour Market:

It is evident from the literature (Paul and Moser, 2009; Wanberg, 2012) that unemployment has a negative impact on health both physically and mentally. "Unemployment causes substantial and long-term declines in subjective well-being and other outcomes, such as mental and physical health" (Leopold, et al. 2017, p.232). It is therefore imperative to acknowledge the literature in relation to unemployment among immigrants. A study by van Tubergen (2006) in Germany notes how "generally, immigrants have higher unemployment rates than natives" (Fleishmann and Dronkers, 2010, p.337). Morton Beiser's curriculum was

distributed to all public schools in Canada, concluding that "it takes the average immigrant 10 years to reach their potential. During this time the unemployment rate among immigrants is higher than the national average" (Kalyani, 2001, p.10).

In Ireland, the Health Service Executive (HSE) has documented some negative health affects in a report where a "Lack of entitlement to work, extends over a long period, may further compound mental health, with boredom, depression, sense of isolation and loss of self-esteem"(O' Brien, 2014). This can have a direct impact upon our migrant community's sense of belonging and their ability or willingness to participate fully in Irish society.

Due to the ever increasing number of displaced people worldwide, Ireland has become host to a large number of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants over the last number of years. Irish society is becoming more diverse than ever before. While the unemployment rate is similar for non-Irish nationals to that of Irish nationals (McGinnity et al. 2018a), there are important differences in the ability to access the labour market for different groups of non-Irish nationals.

"Unlike EU nationals who have the right to reside and work in Ireland, access to the labour market for non-EU nationals is regulated by labour migration policy. Most newly arrived non-EU nationals are not entitled to automatic access to the Irish labour market and must hold an employment permit in order to take up employment" (McGinnity et al. 2018b).

"International student mobility has grown significantly worldwide over the past two decades, increasing from two million to five million between 1999 and 2016 (OECD, 2018)" (Groarke and Durst, 2019, p.iii). According to O' Brien (2019) the total number of full-time, non-EEA international students reached nearly 18,500 in 2018 and approximately another 5000 EU students were enrolled in colleges throughout Ireland the same year. International students, depending on their country of origin, may have permission to access the labour market in Ireland. Students from the European Economic Area (EEA) are generally entitled to study and work without restriction in Ireland (Grad Ireland, 2020). However, non-Eu students are only entitled to work 20 hours per week during term and 40 hours per week in the summer months. Many students, approximately 55%, do not partake in employment through term time for a variety of reasons (Harmon and Erskine, 2016, p. 84).

Prior to 2018, asylum seekers were not allowed to seek or enter employment. "This changed on the 2nd July 2018, when the EU Reception Conditions Directive was transposed

into Irish Law. This means that asylum seekers are eligible to enter the labour market, but it is limited to people who have not yet received a first instance recommendation within nine months" (Doras, 2018). Therefore excluding a large number of migrants access to the labour market.

With all these regulations and stipulations for migrants to access the labour market, it highlights an understanding of how difficult it can be to obtain work in Ireland and how this lack of employment can impact on their physical and mental health. For those who are unable to work, volunteering may be an option to provide a sense of purpose, fulfilment and a possibility of access to the labour market.

2.3.1 Foreign Volunteers in Ireland:

While access to the labour market may not be feasible for some migrants, there are opportunities to access voluntary work in a variety of ways. For individuals from the EU and the EEA, volunteering is open to migrants who choose to stay in Ireland for more than three months, but must acquire a residence or study permit prior to doing so. "UK nationals do not need any residence permit to enter or stay in the Republic of Ireland" (AVSO & CEV, 2005, pp. 7-8), and so are permitted to volunteer immediately. However, non-EEA nationals must obtain a visa for stays of longer than three months. "They must also obtain a work permit, including in cases where they enter for the purposes of nonremunerated voluntary activity" AVSO & CEV, 2005, pp. 7-8). According to INIS (2020), under immigration stamp 3, non-EEA citizens can apply to volunteer in Ireland for a period of one to two years maximum. As soon as an asylum seeker arrives in Ireland they are permitted to volunteer. Those who are in the process of appealing against a decision to refuse asylum are also entitled to volunteer. The following section discusses the literature that highlights some of the benefits of volunteering for migrants who are not eligible to work.

2.4 Benefits of Volunteering for migrants:

Asylum seekers, refugees and migrants have come to Ireland for many years, seeking refuge, or in order to rebuild their lives. "When immigrants arrive in a new country, especially as refugees or asylum-seekers, they face significant emotional, social and economic distress, and must undergo an arduous process of acculturation" (Berry,1997 cited in Greenspan et al. 2018, p.805). Participating in voluntary work could be considered one aspect to assist in this acculturation. Volunteering can enable migrants to integrate into Irish society, where they will

make new contacts, improve their knowledge of the language, gain new experiences and build a social support for themselves. In other words, volunteering can help with their resettlement and can improve their mental and physical health. While some migrants may not have a right to work in Ireland, there may be an opportunity to volunteer (See 2.3.1). The following section will look at social integration through volunteering as a benefit to migrants and also how volunteering can have a positive impact on their wellbeing.

2.4.1 Social Integration through volunteering:

With an influx of migrants in recent years, integration into Irish society is of paramount importance. "Immigrant integration refers to immigrants' equal access to resources that allow their active participation in social, cultural and economic life (Phillimore, 2012, cited in Greenspan et al., 2018, p. 803). Migrants bring hopes, dreams, skills and aspirations for a better future with them to a host country. However, expectations of a better life can be impeded by "language and cultural barriers, discrimination, and other unjust conditions, which limit their opportunities for a successful experience" (Taurini et al. 2017, p.32). In a country where the culture and the language are different from their own, there is a possibility that immigrants could lose their social and human capital (Berhanu, 2017). It is therefore, "paramount to promote a fast and effective integration of migrants" (OECD/EU, 2018, p.9).

Despite these challenges, research highlights the importance of volunteering to assist in the integration of immigrants for a variety of reasons. According to Putnam (2000) volunteering builds up social capital, and Ecklund, (2005) states that volunteering can "enhance their cultural networks and peer support" (Greenspan et al. 2018, p.806). Volunteering also brings with it the opportunity to improve language skills (Handy and Greenspan, 2009); soft skills/hard skills (Kamerāde, 2013) and also experience that may enhance the opportunity to enter the workforce (Baert and Vujic, 2016). "The integration of immigrants and of their children is vital for social cohesion and inclusive growth and the ability of migrants to become self-reliant, productive citizens" (OECD, 2018, p.17).

The Government's 'Migration Integration Strategy' (DJE, 2017, p.34) is "underpinned by the vision that migrants are facilitated to play a full role in Irish society, that integration is a core principle of Irish life and that Irish society and institutions work together to promote integration" (McGinnity, 2018b). However, for this to become a reality, integration needs to be looked at from two perspectives. One where migrants social integration helps to develop a sense of belonging in Irish society, and the other where Irish people accept immigrants as

members of Irish society. "Such mutual recognition, apart from improving individual well-being, leads to better social cohesion" (Laurentsyeva and Venturini, 2017, p.285).

By promoting volunteering among the less well represented groups (DJE, 2017), immigrants will have, a greater opportunity to integrate into Irish society, which in turn will promote their physical and mental wellbeing. There appears to be a wealth of research highlighting how important volunteering is in relation to integration for migrants. What is missing from the literature is discussions about the best way to involve immigrants in volunteering in order to promote their integration. This will be discussed further in chapter 5, Conclusions and Recommendations.

2.4.2 Well-being:

"Becoming actively involved in the host-country society is a key element in immigrant integration and has strong implications for immigrant well-being" (OECD, 2018, p.17). If integration is key to immigrants well-being, it is imperative to have an understanding of what well-being is. Well-being is a growing area of research with many definitions. In order to understand well-being the researcher has combined two perspectives, that of Hettler and Seligman. Hettler's (1984) model of wellness focuses on "a balance between six dimensions: Physical, Spiritual, Intellectual, Social, Emotional and Occupational" (McMahon et al. 2010, p.283). Seligman on the other hand, believes that "the topic of positive psychology is well-being, that the gold standard for measuring well-being is flourishing, and that the goal of positive psychology is to increase flourishing" (2011, p.13). Seligman introduced the idea of the PERMA model of wellbeing within positive psychology (see section 1.3). The researcher believes that a combination of Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment achieved through volunteering, can lead to a balance of Hettler's six dimensions, which leads to wellness or well-being. Furthermore, immigrants have an opportunity to 'flourish'.

Immigrants health and wellbeing can be affected by a variety of factors, such as their age, country of origin, their reason for immigrating and also the length of time they have spent in a host country. The Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare (2020) state that "immigrants health is influenced by cultural ideas of health, illnesses, and the prevention, treatment and symptoms of illness." There is growing evidence (Royal College of Paediatrics, 2019; Doras, 2019), that highlights how living circumstances can also impact on health and wellbeing, for example immigrants who live in Direct Provision centres are more likely to suffer with physical

and mental health issues. Therefore factors that support wellbeing among immigrants must be encouraged.

What is evident from the literature, is that there is a plethora of research about the positive impacts volunteering can have on volunteer's physical and mental health (NCVO, 2018; Woods, 2017). Wilson & Musick's, (1999) research in the US is an important addition to the literature, as it "explores the impact that volunteering has on citizenship, physical health and mental health using prior research and primary analysis of longitudinal data" (Woods, 2017, p.3). Another example from Southby et al. (2019, p.907) states that "volunteering can improve the physical and mental health of volunteers (Alspach 2014; Fegan and Cook 2014; Salt et al. 2017; Yeung et al. 2017), provide a positive pathway for those experiencing social isolation (O'Brien et al. 2010; South et al. 2013), reduce hospital service usage (Kim and Konrath 2016), and help connect services to at-risk groups (Gilbert et al. 2018; Harris et al. 2015)." With an evidently strong link between volunteering and wellbeing, physical and mental health, this research aims to build upon the literature, by highlighting the benefits of volunteering on immigrants wellbeing, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4, Findings and Analysis. While there is a wealth of literature and research about the benefits of volunteering, it is also important to highlight the barriers to volunteering for migrants which will be discussed in the following section.

2.5 Barriers to volunteering for migrants:

Research on volunteering has been addressed in abundance over the last decade or so. However, a number of research gaps have been identified concerning barriers to volunteering. In 2016 "a rapid review of evidence on volunteering and inequalities, with a focus on what helps and hinders people taking part in volunteering" (2016, p.4) was completed by Southby and South. This research also highlighted how there was a number of research gaps, stating that "There is a need for a full systematic review of the available evidence concerning barriers to volunteering, especially those faced by socially excluded groups" (Ibid, p.7). Prompted by this gap in the literature, Southby et al. completed further research in order to "provide an overview of the breadth and interconnectedness of barriers to volunteering for potentially disadvantaged groups" (2019, p.907).

Here in Ireland, a call for input on the National Volunteering Strategy provided insight into barriers from the volunteers perspective which included "a lack of flexibility in the way,

time and manner in which people could volunteer, while many volunteers also highlighted that their contribution is not fully recognised or valued and that practical issues such as transport costs were not addressed" (DRCD, 2019, p.28). Some of these issues cross with the findings of the research. However, personal experiences working with asylum seekers and the literature guides the researcher to look at ethnicity and volunteering and also the residence status of migrants as possible barriers to volunteering.

2.5.1 Ethnicity and Volunteering:

Southby and South's (2016) review of the barriers to volunteering, shows how 14 different papers describe a complex relationship between ethnicity and volunteering. The main themes from these papers suggest that "different cultures may think about and value volunteering differently." Due to an increase in ethnic and cultural diversity in Ireland and with the knowledge of the values of volunteering, it would suggest, that there is a need for more research into the barriers to volunteering for the various groups of immigrants living here. Sundeen et al's (2019, p.930) research, highlights how much of the literature on volunteering in the United States of America (USA), is "focused on the general population rather than specific ethnic and immigrant groups." This could also be said of Ireland. The aim of this research was to add to the literature and highlight barriers to volunteering experienced by immigrants in Ireland.

It is evident from international literature (Handy and Greenspan, 2009; Southby et al. 2016, 2019; Sundeen et al. 2019) that there are certain variables associated with volunteering by ethnic/immigrant groups. Immigrants were more inclined to volunteer if they had a higher education, a higher income, were employed part-time and arrived in a host-country at less than ten years old (Sundeen et. al, 2019). A survey completed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (2009-2010) in England highlighted how education, income, socio-economic, employment status, and the level of socio-economic deprivation were predictors of formal volunteering. There appears to be a cross-over in some variables. The researcher noted that all the participants who were interviewed for this research, had some form of higher education. This illustrates some similarities to the literature. However, as one particular group of immigrants (namely asylum seekers/refugees) were not involved in the research, assumptions cannot be made as to the variables that predict volunteering from this cohort. This also means that some information regarding barriers to volunteering may not be included.

More specific investigation and research into why different groups of immigrants volunteer or don't volunteer in Ireland, and what variables predict their participation is required.

Louth Volunteer Centre's booklet on 'Migrant Volunteering in the Community' features the main barriers and challenges identified by migrants. Some of these "include lack of information, time and language barriers, racism and diversity issues, misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of the volunteering, lack of childcare, lack or relevant opportunities, issues relating to Garda vetting and character references and issues relating to legal status of the migrant" (2019, p.17). This is consistent with the research completed, with a crossover in some of these issues, such as garda vetting, language and times issues. According to Southby and South (2016, p.912), "People from minority ethnic groups may also experience limited access to volunteering infrastructures, feel alienated or excluded within volunteer organisations and environments, have fewer skills and resources to volunteer, and experience fewer positive outcomes from volunteering." There seems to be a continuity in the literature that provides evidence about volunteering and inequalities, and variables that predict volunteering across different immigrant groups. Research also highlights barriers to volunteering for various demographic groups who are most at risk of social exclusion, which will be discussed in the following section.

2.5.2 Social Exclusion based on residence status:

Volunteering brings benefits to those who volunteer, including social and emotional wellbeing, opportunities to integrate, improve their language skills and much more. Volunteering can also provide a positive pathway for those experiencing social isolation (O'Brien et al. 2010; South et al. 2013). "However, those who have most to gain from volunteering are not always able to take part (NNVIA - The Network of National Volunteer Involving Agencies, 2011 cited in Southby and South, 2016, p.8).

According to Social Justice Ireland (2019) asylum seekers could be considered one of the most excluded and marginalised groups in Ireland. As part of the asylum process in Ireland, the Reception Integration Agency (RIA) are responsible for housing asylum seekers while they are awaiting refugee status or leave to remain. The Direct Provision Dispersal (DPD) system sees asylum seekers dispersed away from Dublin to regional centres across Ireland, many of which are in isolated rural areas. While living in Direct Provision (DP) centres, asylum seekers receive a minimal €38.80 weekly payment and must rely on transport provided by the centres as local transport can be costly and irregular.

Research in relation to "volunteering and social exclusion found that volunteering, like many other activities, has a social gradient with people from more disadvantaged areas less likely to volunteer" (Southby and South, 2016, p.7). However, while volunteering is a process for immigrants to increase their "personal, social, financial and cultural resources in order to overcome exclusion, volunteering also consumes one's resources" (Ibid). Therefore, naturally as asylum seekers have access to less personal and social resources, and lack many resources, they are less able to become involved in volunteering and reap the benefits associated with volunteering. Phillimore and Goodson (2005) contend through their research that "high levels of unemployment and underemployment currently experienced by asylum seeking refugees may serve to exclude them from society in dispersal areas and in so doing exacerbate the general levels of social exclusion in those areas. As some asylum seekers are not legally allowed to work in Ireland, volunteering is an option that could provide opportunities to increase their personal, social and cultural resources in order to combat social exclusion.

2.6 Conclusion:

The literature has shown that more is known about the benefits of volunteering than the barriers to volunteering. Completing research into the barriers to volunteering for migrants, provides an opportunity for community and voluntary organisations and Government to gain insight, improve and modify policies and programmes for migrants. Further research is necessary for the analysis of the barriers to volunteering, especially in an Irish context to include barriers experienced by different immigrant groups. "Whilst the benefits of volunteering are increasingly documented by research and championed by policy, there are questions about the success of this approach given that the underlying social inequalities present substantive barriers to volunteering and must be addressed to promote greater access" (Southby et al, 2019, p. 907).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter introduces the methodology and methods that the researcher employed to complete this study and understand the benefits of and barriers to volunteering for migrants. The researcher followed a systematic approach to gain a broad understanding of the topic and achieve maximum results. A survey was considered during the initial research proposal in order to select participants, but this was deemed unnecessary. Liaising with the community partner, highlighted how participants could be recruited through the Cork Volunteer Centre.

Research is a systematic inquiry to describe, explain, predict, and control an observed phenomenon. Considering the research questions and objectives, a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews was deemed to be the most appropriate method for this research. "The interview is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research" (Bryman, 2008, p.436). A qualitative method was chosen, as it is a process that is about inquiry and is more concerned with words rather than numbers, and it is inductive in nature.

3.2 Ontology:

"Ontology is the study of 'being' and is concerned with 'what is', i.e., the nature of existence and structure of reality as such or what is possible to know about the world" (Al-Saadi, 2014, p. 1). A constructionist approach highlights how knowledge is produced through exploring and understanding the social world of the people being studied. Therefore, constructionism was chosen as the ontological position for this research as it focussed on the meaning and interpretations of the participants garnered through the semi-structured interviews. Bryman (2012, p.33) "asserts that social phenomena and their meaning are continually being accomplished by social actors" (Bryman, 2012, p.33). Therefore the meanings (themes/sub-themes) were socially constructed by the social actors (participants) in a particular context (volunteering).

3.3 Epistemology:

The research was inductive and interpretive in nature. An interpretivist methodology was chosen in order to highlight the importance of meaning, personal experience and identity to research participants (Carey, 2009). An interpretivist epistemology also allowed for subjective reality in an attempt to see the world from the participants perspective. Inductive

research "involves the search for pattern from observation and the development of explanations – theories – for those patterns through series of hypotheses" (Bernard, 2011, p.7). The researcher chose semi-structured interviews for this research in order to explore the benefits and barriers to volunteering from personal experiences. The underlying components of an interpretive paradigm is observation and interpretation. Therefore a semi-structured interview would allow for the gathering of information through questioning and observation, while the analysis would allow for patterns to emerge and aid in the interpretation of that information. (Thomas, 2010).

3.4 Methods/Research Sample:

3.4.1 Sample Criteria:

Purposive sampling was the chosen method of recruiting participants. "The goal of purposive sampling is to sample cases/participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed" (Bryman, 2012, p.418). A discussion was held between the researcher, the Community partner and the researcher's supervisor in order to identify potential interview participants. As this research deals with migrants and volunteering, consisted of no funding and needed to be completed within a short timeframe, the participants needed to meet a certain criteria. A key concept of purposive sampling is criterion sampling, where all participants meet a certain criterion. (Bryman, 2012).

The following criteria (see Appendix A1) was requested:

(1) Be a non-Irish national.

(2) Not have English as a first language.

(3) Have a good working knowledge of English

(4) Be currently volunteering or have completed a volunteering role.

It was necessary to include criterion sampling under the above attributes, as the researcher wanted to narrow down the search for participants. The rationale behind attributes one and two, was to include migrants from a range of backgrounds. It was imperative that they had a good working knowledge of English (attribute three) as there was no funding available to pay for an interpreter. The final attribute was chosen because each participant would have experience in volunteering and therefore be able to provide rich data in relation to the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering.

3.4.2 Sampling Method and Recruitment:

While it is important to consider the sample size, it is impossible to include a large number of participants. According to Punch (1998. p. 193) "we cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything." A sample of five participants were chosen. As the approach aims for a depth of understanding and an understanding of how participants interpret their own experiences, a relatively small number of semi-structured interviews could permit this. This would not be possible with more quantitative methods such as a survey, which emphasises statistical significances over and above experiential data. The participants were recruited by advertising on a poster (see Appendix A1) in the Cork Volunteer Centre. Also an email (see Appendix A2) was sent out to volunteers who had marked non-Irish national on their volunteer application through the Cork Volunteer Centre. Participants were asked to contact the researcher to organise a suitable time and date for their interview. The researcher chose the first five participants who responded to the email and poster advertising. The participants were unknown to the researcher in order to avoid influencing research outcomes.

3.4.3 Data Collection:

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data and give insight into the subject of volunteering. Each interview ranged in time from 20 minutes to 45 minutes. The interviews were recorded on a Dictaphone, this allowed the researcher to focus attention on what was being said rather that note taking. "The data is naturally occurring conversation as a feature of social life, and the use of tape-recordings and transcripts is a practical strategy for apprehending it, and making it available for extended analysis" (Button and Lee, 1987, cited in Tessier, 2012, p.447).

The researcher completed a pilot interview, in order to become familiar with timing and to iron out any issues that arose with questions. This was completed with a volunteer from the Cork Volunteer Centre who also met the criteria. The researcher then interviewed five other participants. Open-ended questions were asked, in order to allow for the researcher to gather information from the participants. As a social work student the researcher was able to use listening and communication skills to either clarify information provided by participants or to gain more information from participants.

Data collected on a Dictaphone is password protected and kept in a locked filing cabinet. All written data collected is stored on a password protected computer. All data is anonymised to protect the participants.

3.4.4 Data Analysis:

Thematic analysis was the chosen method for analysing the data collected. "Thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006,p.78). The researcher used thematic analysis to highlight themes and subthemes (See Appendix A5). Thematic content analysis is just one method that can be used to identify and analyse data, but is often associated with qualitative interviews. "Qualitative approaches are incredibly diverse, complex and nuanced and thematic analysis should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis" (Holloway & Todres, 2003 cited in Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.77). The main aim of thematic analysis is to find common patterns across a set of data arising from the perceptions and experiences of the participants. "The analyst looks for themes which are present in the whole set or sub-set of interviews and creates a framework of these for making comparisons and contrasts between the different respondents" (Gomm, 2008, p.244).

The researcher found four overarching themes;

(1) Benefits/Positives of volunteering,
(2) Barriers/Negatives to volunteering,
(3) Difficulties in volunteering and
(4) What can be done to make it easier for migrants to volunteer.

The researcher also found sub-themes emerging from the interviews, that correlate to Seligman's PERMA model, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4 Findings and Analysis.

3.5 Limitations:

Limitations of a study often emerge through the process of the research as unanticipated challenges or characteristics of the methodology/design that impacted or influenced the research and its findings (Price and Murnan, 2004). Due to time constraints, a lack of funding and a limited word count, the research was impacted arising in some limitations to the research process. In the next section, these limitations will be listed and elucidated.

3.5.1 Methodological Limitations:

♦ **Issues with sample and selection:**

There were also some methodological limitations, for example with the sample and selection. While the sampling method chosen, eliminated researcher bias, an error occurred known as 'sample bias' or 'selection bias', which impacted the research. Using a probability sampling method, including a criterion sample, participants were from a variety of backgrounds. (See Table 1). This sample of participants does not reflect the general population and a cohort of the population that I hoped would also benefit from this research.

Country of Origin	Number	Age	Gender	Status
India	2	20-40	F	Student Migrant Economic Dependant Migrant
Ecuador	1	20-40	F	Student Migrant
Egypt	1	40+	M	Economic Migrant
England	1	50+	M	Retiree

Table 1: Volunteer's Attributes.

During sampling, asylum seeking or refugee migrants did not come forward to be interviewed. It is with this in mind, that a more purposive sample was sought in order to interview an asylum seeker/refugee. The researcher used contacts from the social work placement in Nasc, Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre to source suitable participants. However, due to the circumstances of Covid-19, face-to-face interviews were not permitted. The participant was also unable to partake in an interview over the phone or through a video call, due to current living arrangements and children in the home. The researcher, tried on two other attempts to seek an interview with asylum seekers/refugees. Unfortunately, both cited difficult living circumstances and having children at home due to Covid-19, as being reasons why they could not partake. It is with sadness that the researcher had to move forward, therefore excluding this cohort of migrants. Nonetheless, this highlights that further research could be conducted with this cohort of participants in the future.

Another limitation arose when one participant who was chosen to be interviewed, did not meet all of the criteria. While the participant met most of the criteria, English was the participants first language. The researcher chose to include this participant even though they did not fully meet the criteria, as they provided an interview full of depth and information and

enriched the data for analysis. Also, time constraints and the circumstances surrounding Covid-19, did not allow for further interviews.

- ♦ **Sample size:**

While the sample size was small, it was sufficient for the work that the researcher undertook. A sampling error occurred throughout the research as the researcher had to sample a small number of participants, in a local area. Consequently, this research does not represent a national finding or a general population and is therefore not wholly representative and so not generalisable. However, generalisability was not the intent/goal of the researcher to begin with. Moreover, this creates an opportunity for further research to include a larger sample size, and possible research comparing urban and rural volunteering experiences. Further research around specific migrant groups such as asylum seekers or refugees and their volunteering experiences, could be the focus of another research topic.

- ♦ **Lack of previous research:**

Limitations arose in relation to previous research. There was a rich amount of literature in relation to the benefits of volunteering, but there seemed to be a gap in domestic literature in relation to migrants' experiences of volunteering in Ireland. There was also a gap in the literature in relation to the barriers to volunteering for migrants both internationally and nationally. There was a dearth of research in relation to how beneficial volunteering is for immigrant integration internationally, again there was a gap nationally in this area. This research provided the researcher with an opportunity to bridge the gap in the literature and also add to the current literature in relation to the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering for migrants in Ireland.

3.5.2 Researcher limitations:

- ♦ **Limited access to data:**

As the research depended on having access to people, a limitation arose through the current Covid-19 crisis, where the researcher had limited access to asylum seeking/refugee migrants. This impacted the research as it does not provide a complete range of migrants. However, it does allow for further research in this area with asylum seeking/refugee migrants in Ireland.

♦ **Time constraints:**

The research took place over four months which was enough time to complete a small sample of participants. However, there are limitations to this as it does not provide a general population or a national study. Nonetheless this opens up the possibility for a future study with a larger sample over a longer period of time in order to provide a national study for this research.

♦ **Conflicts arising from cultural or personal bias':**

In order to avoid cultural or personal bias', the researcher considered a varied sample of participants from a range of different cultural backgrounds, to include both males and females with consideration to a variety of ages, to ensure the data-gathering process was carried out appropriately and fairly.

3.6 Ethical Considerations:

"Some qualitative research deals with the most sensitive, intimate and innermost matters in people's lives, and ethical issues inevitably accompany the collection of such information" (Punch, 1998, p.281). It is also important as a researcher to be aware of the more vulnerable groups in society. According to McLaughlin and Velcamp (2015, p. 29) "Recognizing immigrants as vulnerable in the context of research calls for heightened precautions and attention to the ethics." Bearing this in mind it was imperative to consider ethics when completing this research with migrants. However, a discussion was had between the CARL supervisor, the Community Partner, the research Supervisor and the researcher in relation to possible ethical considerations. It was decided that if all participants were over the age of 18 years, there would be no need to complete an application for approval from the Social Research Ethics Committee (SREC) in University College Cork (UCC).

The researcher aimed to follow some basic guidelines while completing this research;

(a) *Dignity and respect* – the rights of individuals and groups should be respected.
(b) *Do no harm* – Research should aim to maximise benefit for individuals and society and minimise harm and risk.

(c) *Informed consent* – This "involves ensuring that all potential research participants are fully informed about every aspect of the investigation and any issues that might influence their decision to participate" (Hardwick and Worsley, 2011, p. 33). It is also important to ensure the participants, that they can withdraw their participation at any time.

(d) *Integrity* - Broadly speaking, honesty and probity in conducting research. The term can also refer to the extent to which data can be regarded as trustworthy.

(e) *Privacy* - According to Hardwick and Worsley (2011, p. 35) there are "three established ways of protecting participants' privacy." They are:

i. Confidentiality – The principle behind this is that all data and information gathered during the research is kept private and only with the explicit consent of the participant can this data be revealed to third parties.

ii. Anonymity - This is to assure participants that their identity will be protected from disclosure and that their name will be replaced by pseudonyms for the purpose of the research.

iii. Editing – Here it is important to have transparency for all involved, where participants can see all relevant information gathered about them and can choose whether this information be edited out or revealed.

3.7 Time Scale

The researcher began the research in January of 2020. The researcher aims to be completed by the 30th of April 2020. Therefore, it was proposed that the following timeline would be a guideline, for the purpose of this research.

Stages of the research	Starting date	Completion date
Planning the research	September	December
Carrying out the research	January	February
Interviews	Mid- February	Late February
Analysing	Late February	March
Writing report	March	April

3.8 Researcher Positionality:

It is imperative when completing any research to consider the researcher's personal bias and how this might impact on the research. The researcher felt drawn to this particular research topic as her previous social work placement working with asylum seekers and refugees highlighted personal experiences. The researcher believes that this type of research could have an impact on migrants from all backgrounds, and could be beneficial to community and voluntary organisations. As a social work student, the researcher has learned to be open, expect the unexpected and be non-judgemental. The researcher felt that this impacted the research in a positive way and helped her to be open and unbiased in her research methods.

3.9 Conclusion:

This chapter has provided the reader with a rational and methodological detail of the research, including limitations to the research through a step by step process. Chapter four will discuss the findings of the research and provide an analysis to the research.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter will illustrate the findings of the research. It focusses on the data that arose from the semi-structured interviews and their analysis. It presents themes that emerged from the research questions and sub-themes that emerged from the interviews. The main findings that emerged relate to four main thematic areas; the benefits/positives of volunteering, the barriers/negatives to volunteering, the difficulties in volunteering and what can be done to make it easier for migrants to volunteer.

4.2 Benefits/Positives to volunteering:

According to Vecina and Fernando (2013, p. 870) "In recent years, volunteerism has been related to numerous and varied positive effects." This research, therefore sought to add to the literature on the benefits of volunteering, through the perspective of migrants. One of the strongest themes to emerge from the data concerns the benefits and positive aspects of volunteering. (See Figure 1). This was an area that was spoken about across the participant group. For the purpose of anonymity, the interviewees will be referred to as I1, I2, I3, I4 and I5.
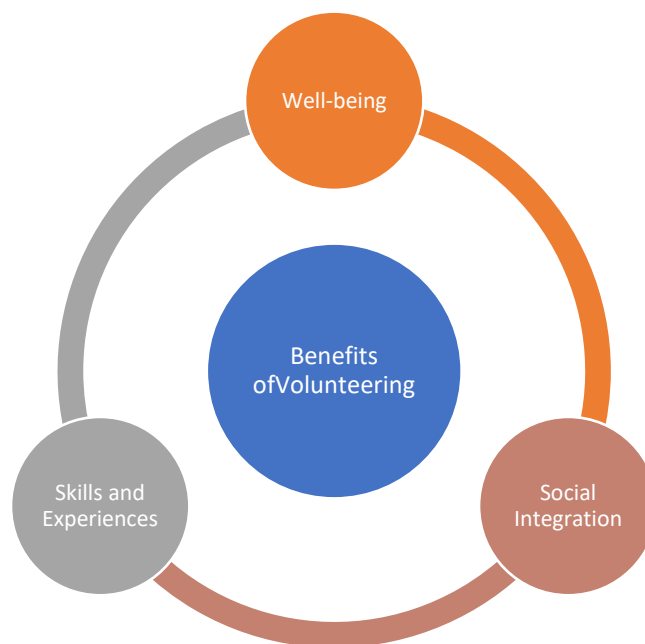

Figure 1: Benefits to Volunteering.

4.2.1 Well-being:

"Well-being is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and an ability to manage stress" (Davis, 2019). As previously stated, the researcher's framework took Seligman's PERMA model (2011) of wellbeing into consideration. While the literature does not link Seligman's model to volunteering, the researcher noticed how subthemes that devolved from the interviews were linked to the PERMA acronym (Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment). There is a dearth of literature (Meier & Stutzer, 2008; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001; Vecina & Chacón, 2005), that highlights how those who volunteer feel benefits "in terms of subjective well-being, life satisfaction, and the experience of positive emotions" (Vecina & Chacón, 2013, p.870). Positive emotions were evident throughout the interviews, with the participants. The interviewees spoke about how volunteering was "fun", made them "feel productive" and gave them a "sense of fulfilment." Some of the interviewees agreed that participating in voluntary work, gave them a purpose;

> "The first motivation would be a purpose, a sense of purpose. I look at myself
> that I am really privileged that I can do lots of things" (I3).

> "I am giving back to a country that has given so much to me" (I4).

and also contributed to a sense of accomplishment. This was achieved through engagement with the community and being able to build relationships with others.

> "Sometimes you feel lonely…so I just need to get myself out there and do
> something." (I4)

> "I wanted to get to know more about the community and how it works and to
> feel more part of the community" (I2).

Interviewees also spoke about how they "got to experience new things" and were able to "prepare for their future career", giving meaning to their voluntary work. Their sense of accomplishment was articulated through personal comments such as, "I am winning" and

"I can improve my communication and even my culture and style and everything" (I5).

It was very interesting to note that some of the participants felt that volunteering benefitted their mental health, which also ties in with the literature (Hustinx et al. 2015; Morrow-Howell et. al. 2003; Musick and Wilson 2008).

"I, myself suffer clinical depression before I came here, so I know what it feels like to suffer mental issues. I think trying to improve that and trying to do a little bit for that is important" (I4).

" I have been with my kids, minding them I feel stressful alone…If I stay inside…it make me more stressful. It make me feel like I'm nothing, I started to feel like that, that's why I wanted to come out" (I5).

Overall, the participants felt that volunteering had a positive impact on their lives. The researcher also recognised the positivity from the analysis of the data. Another emerging sub-theme that of social integration arose and will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.2 Social integration:

"Social integration[v] is the process of fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons" (UN, 1995, p.10). The interviewee's also spoke about the social aspects of volunteering. They spoke about how it helped them to learn about the Irish culture and provided them with an opportunity to become familiar with the community they were living in. According to Handy and Greenspan (2009) immigrants who volunteer can enhance social and human capital which in turn can contribute to integration into the host country. When speaking about the positive

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[v] Other terms that are often associated with social integration are; "social inclusion", "social cohesion" and "social capital".

aspects of volunteering, social integration was an important aspect that emerged and is evidenced through the words of the participants;

> "Volunteering connects you with the community, you're getting out of the house, you are meeting new people and you are learning new skills" (I2).

> "I get to meet new people. Still it's a new country for me, everything is new. I am starting a new life so I am trying to make friends as much as I can" (I3).

What really struck the researcher is the depth of loneliness that can arise for migrants when living in a new country and how much volunteering can help to ease that loneliness.

> "Missing my family is like cancer. You have good days and you have bad days. Like when you are away from your family which in my case, I just feel like I miss my mum so much……So then I started looking for volunteer practice" (I4).

Social participation can help with improving networks, and social supports and also provide a sense of community (Hoffman et al. 2007; Vecina and Chacón, 2013). It was evident that this sense of community was desired by all participants.

> "It feels good to be a part of it….Being migrant, actually I think that brings out the best of you, because you want to fit in" (I4).

This sense of community and social participation also led the participants to experience new things and build upon existing skills, highlighting the following sub-theme 'Skills and Experience' that emerged.

4.2.3 Skills and Experiences:

The optimism held by volunteers in relation to their future careers, was another sub-them to emerge. Volunteering can improve people's skills, provide them with experience and prepare them for future careers. Research (Kamerāde, 2013) suggests that volunteering can improve "both 'hard' skills, such as IT or customer relations, and 'soft' skills, such as

teamwork and communication" (National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), 2018, p.6). One participant, is unable to work due to visa restrictions, but was optimistic about gaining experience in preparation for a future career.

> "We can get some experiences in what you are interested in, and we can get some references while you are applying jobs and everything" (I5).

All of the participants mentioned their skills and how the voluntary activity they were partaking in, either "fit" their skills or helped them to "learn new skills."

> "It is quite easy….and actually fits my skills as well" (I4).

> "I have been nursing all my life….Although I would be familiar with teaching clinical skills, I wouldn't necessarily be familiar with teaching language" (I2).

What was interesting was that three of the participants had found voluntary work that suited their previous studies or career background and their skills, and one participant enjoyed the flexibility of volunteering, without having to be an expert.

> "In colleges, you know, it's usually, we need to be very good at something to be able to make it to a point. But in activities like this you get to be a part of it straight away" (I1).

Whether volunteering leads to employment can depend on a variety of factors. "However, reliable social science evidence to support the idea that volunteering actually helps people find jobs, or improves the quality of those jobs is scarce" (Wilson, 2000, p.232).

4.3 Barriers/ Negatives to volunteering:

Another strong theme to emerge was the barriers or negatives of volunteering for migrants. These findings add to the growing body of evidence "identifying broader exclusionary mechanisms relating to social, economic, and human capital as a cross-cutting concern to participation in volunteering" (Lee & Brudney, 2012; Smith, 2012; Wilson and Musick, 1998). Research also highlights (Southby et al. 2019) that there is a vast array of

specific barriers to volunteering across different demographic groups. The following sub-themes were discussed by the participants throughout the interviews (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Barriers to Volunteering.

4.3.1 Garda Vetting:

Carol Coulter (2011) drew attention to the backlog of 50,000 requests for Garda vetting[vi], nine years ago, impacting volunteers during the European Year of Volunteering in 2011. This created a huge barrier for volunteers who needed Garda vetting to work voluntarily. While there is currently no backlog for Garda vetting (Flanagan, 2019), some of the participants highlighted other issues in relation to Garda vetting prior to starting voluntary work.

One participant spoke about how she knew that she would need to complete Garda vetting but was given no guidelines as to how to do it, and was left without a response when she requested some guidance. Another participant stated in order to complete Garda vetting he needed to provide documentation from his country of origin, which could be retrieved from his embassy in Dublin. With a lack of personal transport and costly methods of public transport, the participant was deterred from seeking Garda vetting.

[vi] The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 provide a statutory basis for the vetting of persons carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable persons.

"To do it you know, I have to go back to my embassy in Dublin, and I live in

Cork, so it's a living hell"(I3).

"Garda vetting is only one part of a 10-step volunteer screening procedure" (Volunteer Ireland, 2020). Without Garda vetting, volunteers are being excluded from working with vulnerable persons and children, limiting their choices in voluntary work placements. While none of the participants spoke about Garda vetting in relation to employment, it is something that might be necessary for employment which is discussed in the subsequent section.

4.3.2 Employment Opportunities:

As previously discussed some participants felt they were gaining experience through volunteering and were able to use and improve on current skills they had. Moreover, some participants felt that there could be a possibility of employment through their voluntary work.

"I was initially told from the course I did that there was a possibility of paid

work, but that never materialised, so I just gave up on that" (I2).

However, the voluntary work did not translate directly into paid work for any of the participants. "Volunteering has a weak impact on people's chances of finding work" (National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2018, p.1). While volunteering can improve people's skills (soft/hard skills) as seen with most of the participants, this doesn't guarantee that they will find a job. Volunteers may gain individual employability-related benefits through those skills or networks, which in some circumstances might have a positive effect on moves into the labour market , yet for others it will have no effect on employment prospects (Ellis Paine et al, 2013; Kamerāde, 2013). One participant felt that some voluntary roles which required lots of training and a lengthy commitment should not be voluntary but paid employment.

"That's a paid job, you know sorry but, really it's a paid job and it's just a cheap

way of supporting mental health services" (I2).

The frustration and feeling of being used or undervalued was evident from this participant, when he spoke about that particular voluntary opportunity. This was reiterated by some of the participants in the succeeding section.

4.3.3 Lack of Appreciation:

Ways of recognising and appreciating the volunteer can vary widely, from something as simple as a 'Thank you' to recognition through an award. Throughout the analysis it became evident that many of the participants felt that they were not appreciated enough or felt used.

"Every people are different you know. Sometimes I feel they are ready to teach me, some people they are not…They just want to use us" (I5).

The experience of volunteering can be impacted by whether the volunteers feel appreciated in their role. (Brooks et al. 2014; NCVO, 2018). One participant highlighted how the lack of interaction with supervisors/organisations made him feel invisible.

"You have no interaction, you know. You almost don't exist!"(I2).

The same participant felt that something as simple as "getting volunteers together" for "tea and cakes" could make him feel valued. Appreciation of volunteers is also recognised in the Department of Rural and Community Development's (DRCD) (2019) 'Working Draft of Volunteering Strategy 2020-2025' in section 1.6 (Shared vision) and 1.7 (Shared values). Theses sections highlight the vision and purpose of the strategy, for Irish society, where volunteering is promoted, valued, and appreciated. "Volunteers who do not receive frequent feedback and recognition begin to wonder if they are doing a good job and if anyone cares about the work they do. This often creates an unmotivating climate, and can result in high volunteer attrition" (Volunteer Centre Limerick, 2020).

While some barriers can be specific to volunteering across different demographic groups (Southby et. al.,2019), the findings suggest that the barriers such as Garda vetting, employment opportunities and lack of appreciation are not necessarily specific to migrants, but could be transferred to other demographic groups in Ireland also.

4.4 Difficulties in volunteering:

Participants were also asked about difficulties they experienced in either trying to obtain voluntary work or when they were involved in voluntary work. The findings from this can be seen in Figure 3 for example; A lack of advertising was cited by four out of five

participants, no response from the voluntary organisation and issues with time were mentioned by three out of five participants and only one out of five mentioned restrictions.
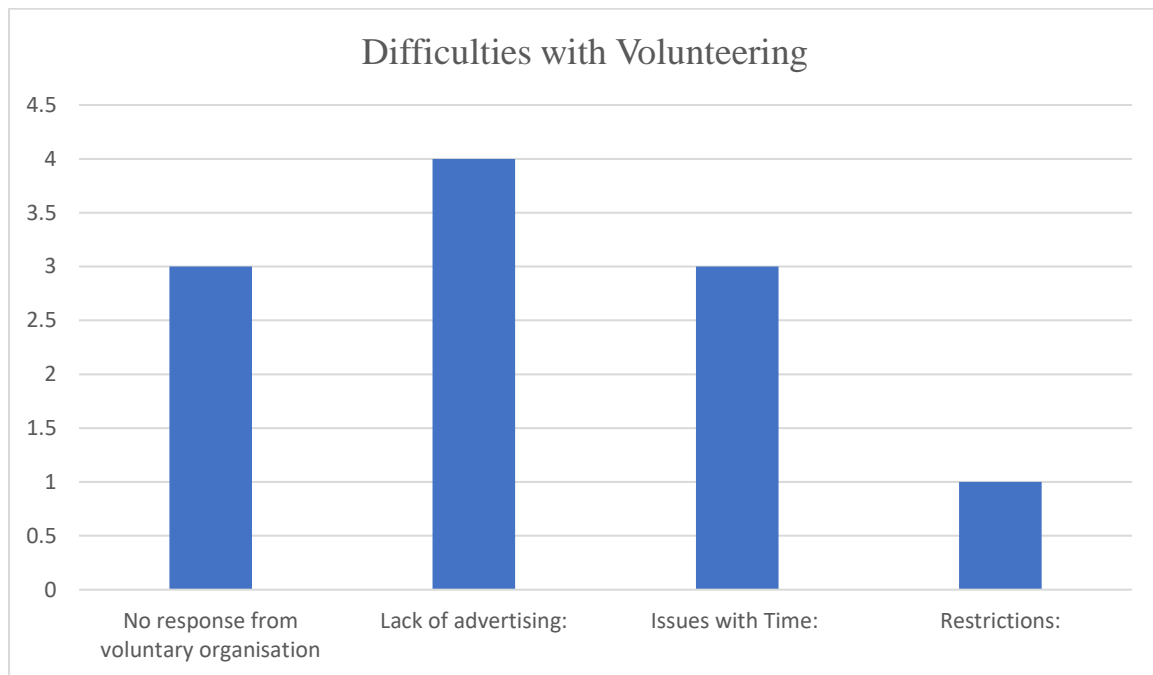
Figure 3: Difficulties in Volunteering (from migrant's perspective).

4.4.1 No response from voluntary organisation:

One of the major difficulties in obtaining voluntary work from the participants perspective, was a lack of responses from the voluntary organisations. This difficulty was articulated by some the participants throughout the interviews. Many of the participants felt that a response would have been appreciated even if it meant that there was no position available. One participant in particular understood the need for Garda vetting, but unfortunately never got a response when looking for guidance in relation to this.

"I needed to do like paperwork and Garda vetting and all that and I was like sure I know that I have to do that. Can you guide me when or how I should do it and then I never get a response" (I4).

Another participant said that they were confused by the lack of, or delay in receiving responses. They believed that if they did not avail of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which involves employees in volunteering, they would have become so frustrated that they would not be volunteering now.

"Whenever I called anyone, they don't come back so that was really bad" (I3).

Another participant reiterated the frustration at a lack of responses;

"I have put my name down for three or four things…and I have not had a response from any of them, even if it was to say we don't need volunteers at the moment, but we have got you on file" (I2).

These findings demonstrate an issue with the response of some organisations, possibly due to staff shortages, a large amount of administrative work or maybe a high volume of people looking to volunteer.

4.4.2 Lack of advertising:

From the participants perspectives a lack of advertising was among the difficult issues that arose when trying to obtain voluntary work. While most of the participants were able to access a computer and the internet, some found it difficult to access voluntary organisations websites. The findings highlight how some participants did not see voluntary work advertised but found their voluntary work/organisations through their college, some found voluntary work through their employment, and others through word of mouth. It appears that much of the voluntary work is sourced through the internet, while all of the participants were technologically savvy, this is not true for many volunteers. There may be issues with accessing the internet, poor broadband, a lack of computer literacy etc. The lack of advertising featured among the majority of the participants as difficulties arising, but so too did issues with time underlined in the next section.

4.4.3 Issues with Time:

Another sub-theme to emerge was an issue with time for some of the participants. For many people, due to various commitments such as childcare, studies, work, etc., there is an increase in pressure when it comes to managing time. In order to take on a commitment as a volunteer, therefore puts increased demands on your time. The attraction to voluntary work can be the idea of flexibility, by helping out when it suits, with no distinct pattern of commitment (Durham, 2019). However, some of the participants found, that hours offered either, did not fit their schedule, required a lengthy commitment, or lacked clarity around times. One participant felt guilty at being unable to fit their voluntary work into their schedule:

"I felt really bad when I said this is clashing with my schedule, I won't be able to do it" (I4).

Another participant spoke about how volunteering jobs often clash with working hours and leaves very little options for them to volunteer.

"Well, it's volunteering, that doesn't mean I don't have a job. I have a job…..I look for anything that's evening and there's very few to nothing" (I3).

Another participant highlighted how for him it was difficult to get used to the "laissez-faire" sense of time in Ireland;

"These are silly things, but I find it really hard that people don't run to time….when you are going to meetings and things to do with volunteering, they never start on time and never arrive on time" (I2).

The same participant noted how some voluntary roles required a lengthy commitment and training which, he considered more of a paid role.

"Some of the volunteering opportunities I was offered…required an enormous amount of training and a commitment of two years" (I2).

This type of commitment could deter some volunteers, as it did with this participant. Other reasons that could deter volunteers are restrictions that arose for one participant in the following section.

4.4.4 Restrictions:

Only one participant mentioned restrictions that arose for her when searching for voluntary work, making it difficult to volunteer.

"So there were groups in (Name of College), where I couldn't join mainly because of restricted, it's usually for people who take certain courses or something, that kind of restriction" (I1).

"It's just general restrictions like that or maybe age restrictions, for example…(Name of Company)…It's for people aged 18-40 years" (I1).

This was an interesting finding because while the researcher understood the possibility of age limits (some volunteer opportunities require a minimum age of 18) it did not occur that there could be an upper age limit to some volunteering organisations. Considering that the perceptions of the participants highlighted barriers and difficulties, it was also imperative to understand what could be done to ameliorate these barriers and difficulties. The following section will discuss the findings in relation to what can could be done to make it easier for migrant to volunteer from their perspectives.

4.5 What can be done to make it easier to volunteer:

The fourth main thematic area highlighted a variety of suggestions from the participants as to what could be done to make it easier for migrants to volunteer in Ireland. The following four sub-themes developed out of the analysis; Enhance accessibility, increase advertising, identify skills and access to the labour market (See Figure 4).

Access to labour market:	Enhance Accessibility.:
"After 2-3 years, maximum 5 years, give them a job or training in the area they like."	"Make it more streamlined" "Build a portal website for voluntary activities" "Make it easier for volunteers – Garda Vetting"
What can be done to make it easier for migrants to volunteer?	
Identify skills:	Increase advertising:
"Ask for their skills" "Give them training in the field they like"	"Advertise more, to change mindset" "More open days to meet with existing volunteers" "Campaign of good experiences." "Raise awareness locally."

Figure 4: What can be done to make it easier to volunteer from a migrant's perspective?

4.5.1 Enhance accessibility:

Many of the participants felt that there were too many ways to get into volunteering and one participant suggested that it should be more streamlined;

"I think at the moment there are too many ways to get into volunteering" (I2).

Another participant suggested that in order to make it easier to become involved in volunteering, there should be a specific volunteering department set up within the Government;

"If I was in control I would definitely get a specific division in Government to handle all that process and make it easier on all the volunteers….it should be less stressful for them" (I3).

The same participant also suggested that through this division, things like Garda vetting would be dealt with making it easier for migrants to volunteer. The idea that volunteering should be made more accessible through colleges, but open to the public (not just students) through social media was another way suggested to enhance accessibility to volunteering.

"It should be really accessible, more accessible…. I mean if they could just build a portal website that has all the volunteering activities or events that we could participate in. It would be nice"(I3).

Creating a more streamlined and accessible way for people to get into volunteering could entice more people to volunteer, which could be advertised through a national campaign as one participant suggests in the subsequent section.

4.5.2 Increase advertising:

It appeared to be a general consensus that volunteering should be advertised more, not just through the websites but locally in order to make it easier for migrants to volunteer. By raising their awareness of voluntary opportunities, the participants felt that migrants would be more inclined to volunteer. To begin with, it was suggested by one participant that;

"It's all about advertising" (I3).

Two participants would like to "increase its presence and popularity", by changing people's perception around volunteering;

> "Volunteering again most people think there is nothing to get out of it, that's the kind of mindset, but it's not like that....So I would advertise about participating in volunteering along those lines" (I1).

> "Actually, I would promote it....Like a campaign of those good experiences and you know something like a slogan like 'You can do more'" (I4).

To add to all these suggestions of advertising, one participant felt that open days would be a more successful way of advertising volunteering and the experiences it brings.

> "There could be more open days, so migrants could see a range of things, where they could meet with existing volunteers" (I2).

Overall advertising was a strong sub-theme to emerge from the analysis and could inform people more about the value of volunteering. Advertising would also be a helpful way to identify skills of volunteers which in turn could prepare them for labour market opportunities , will be discussed in the following two sections.

4.5.3 Identify skills:

Some participants also believed that by identifying skills, this could hone in on specific voluntary jobs that would suit volunteers. One participant felt that by;

> "Asking them for their skills....You are making them feel valued" (I4).

The same participant also felt that by doing this, you would be "thanking migrants for choosing Ireland" and highlighting ways in which they could contribute to Irish society through volunteering. This would also provide volunteers with an opportunity to enhance skills that they already have, but also gain skills that they may not have had previously and may be important for a future in the labour market.

4.5.4 Access to Labour Market:

While most of the participants did not expect to gain employment from their voluntary role, they were building on skills that they believed would benefit their future careers. It was interesting then that one participant suggested that;

"Maybe, if you are doing volunteering for three or four years, more than five years, maximum five years, maybe I give them a job" (I5).

The same participant highlights how Government could respond to long-time volunteers by rewarding them;

"So they are doing already a long time volunteering, so we can give them opportunity, or they tell you what kind of job they like. At least we can give them some training and then give them like employment, labour market" (I5).

This is not evident in the draft National Volunteering Strategy (2019) but is something that could be considered in the future.

4.6 Conclusion:

This chapter has illustrated the findings of the research. It presented themes and sub-themes that emerged from the research questions and interviews, from the personal perspectives of the participants. The following chapter will consider these findings and present conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations:

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter discusses the conclusions and recommendations of the research. At the beginning of this research the aim was to find out what were the benefits of and barriers to volunteering for migrants living in Ireland. Having worked with migrants from an asylum-seeking background, I wanted to explore the benefits of and barriers to volunteering for this cohort of immigrants in Ireland. While the research did not include any migrants from this background, it revealed a lot. From a social work perspective, this potentially means that there is an opportunity to complete further research in this area, which is an area I am extremely interested in and I believe could benefit migrants from an asylum-seeking background. Based on the findings of this research, the following are conclusions and recommendations to the research.

5.2 Conclusion:

Throughout the research, it became evident that there are clear benefits to people who volunteer. However, not everyone volunteers their time equally. This research used semi-structured interviews to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of migrant's views and experiences in volunteering. The research focused on this particular demographic in order to gain an insight into the benefits of volunteering and possible barriers to volunteering for migrants, who are living, studying or working in Ireland. Although there is a wealth of literature on volunteering, which has highlighted a range of barriers and benefits linked to volunteering, there appears to be less literature from an Irish context, and even less literature on volunteering from a migrants perspective.

5.2.1 Benefits:

The benefits cited by the participants are similar to that of the literature. One of the key benefits experienced by the participants was increased wellbeing or physical and mental health (Wilson, 2000), as highlighted in the findings. Through volunteering participants experienced PERMA - Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (Seligman, 2011) which lead to a balance of Hettler's (1984) six dimensions, Physical, Spiritual, Intellectual, Social, Emotional and Occupational wellbeing. Another key component was the importance of volunteering, for all the participants to assist with integrating into the

community, creating a larger network of support for themselves and helping to improve or build on skills. Volunteering helped the participants to build up social capital (Putnam, 2000), cultural capital (Ecklund, 2005; Greenspan et al., 2019) and economic capital (Phillimore, 2012; Greenspan et al., 2018). Participants built upon existing skills such as language skills (Handy and Greenspan, 2009) and soft skills/hard skills (Kamerāde, 2013). All of which are compounded by the literature. With the knowledge that volunteering is beneficial, and with the potential to help promote mental health, and possibly lead to a sense of self efficacy, why then are more migrants not volunteering, especially those from an asylum seeking background? This issue will be addressed in the recommendations.

5.2.2 Barriers:

Several of the barriers that prevented migrants from becoming involved in volunteering were also similar to the literature. Barriers such as time issues, study commitments, work commitments (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011) and a lack of appreciation (NCVO, 2018) coincide with findings from the literature. Interestingly enough Garda Vetting was something that arose for a few of the participants. This is not evident in the literature as a barrier to volunteering. While some form of police clearance check is mandatory for most forms of employment, the researcher is unsure if it is necessary for volunteering in all countries. Therefore, further explorations of this would be necessary. While Garda vetting seems to be impeding some volunteers from taking up a voluntary position, voluntary organisations could help with this process in order to address this issue. What also became clear throughout the process of the research is that there is a variety of issues that arose that could be remedied and will be discussed in the recommendations.

5.3 Recommendations:

Throughout the research certain aspects arose from the process of the research and through the findings of the research that have led to the following recommendations.

5.3.1 Advertising Campaign:

Many of the participants believed that while volunteering is beneficial to them, there is a lack information, in relation to volunteering, and they felt that it could be advertised more. One participant even suggested a campaign to include a slogan. "You can do more!" This could be done through national media, such as newspaper adverts, television, radio and also

through social media platforms such as Instagram or Facebook in order to reach a broader audience. Campaigning for volunteering among national and secondary schools would also be another way of reaching a wider audience.

5.3.2 Increase Awareness:

It became apparent that specific immigrant groups such as asylum seekers and refugees did not come forward to participate in the research. Research suggests that some migrants are "suspicious of volunteering as simply free labour, when they find it difficult to secure paid work at a level corresponding to their qualifications" (Vatz-Laarousi 2005 cited in Couton and Gaudet, 2008, p22), or when they are not entitled to work at all.

The researcher therefore recommends, that the value of volunteering and the variety of volunteering opportunities needs to reach this audience. This could be achieved through promoting the benefits of volunteering and increasing awareness of volunteering as an option for migrants who might not be entitled to work. Organisations recruiting volunteers, organisations that work with migrants, the Government and various media platforms could highlight how volunteering is a valid legal option for them and has a range of benefits. I would recommend raising awareness in Direct Provision Centres nationally, by having an outreach worker who could highlight the value of volunteering to migrants as another way to address this.

While some asylum seekers/refugees might be put off by other barriers such as childcare, transport, lack of finances etc., the researcher feels that increased funding to organisations who recruit volunteers could alleviate some of these barriers. In December 2017, a Call For Input (CFI) to the National Volunteering Strategy highlighted a section on 'Challenges to Volunteering.' One area discussed was the issue of aiming to increase participation of marginalised groups in volunteering (DRCD, 2019). This leads the researcher to the next section of Government policy and funding.

5.3.3 Government Policy and Funding:

"Volunteering in Ireland faces many challenges, such as changing demands from volunteers, demographic changes and lack of resourcing" (Volunteer Ireland, 2020). The CFI and Stakeholder consultations concur that the "primary challenge to volunteering in Ireland isn't a lack of people willing to volunteer, rather it is the limited resources of volunteer involving organisations" (2019, p.28). Therefore the researcher proposes that an increase in funding from the Government would be beneficial to volunteer organisations as well as

marginalised communities in Irish society. This can be achieved through the commencement and implementation of the National Volunteering Strategy 2020-2025. Implementing the strategy will enable the DRCD to deliver the strategic objectives, and provide investment which is essential to a thriving, dynamic volunteering culture here in Ireland.

5.3.4 Further Research:

This research explored and analysed a small sample of participants from a migrant background. Conducting research on a larger scale, either regionally or nationally, to include a wider range of migrants from various backgrounds, would be beneficial to domestic research. This could improve and build upon current knowledge in the field of volunteering, for various organisations, volunteers, Government and social workers. While there was a wealth of literature in relation to the benefits of volunteering, there appeared to be limited research into the barriers of volunteering, for migrants. Possible future research could consider a larger scale study in order to bridge the gap nationally in this area and add to the literature currently available. Finally, this research raised questions as to the value of volunteering for different ethnicities and cultures. Therefore, international research to establish the value of volunteering across different cultures could be beneficial to the field of, volunteering.

5.4 Value to Social Work:

With an increase in immigration worldwide and especially here in Ireland, immigrant and refugee rights and issues related to immigrant and refugee integration and settlement are starting to come to the fore of social work practice. It is important as social workers that we recognise the unique challenges that immigrants and refugees face when arriving in a new country. Social workers work in a variety of settings and are therefore in a pivotal position to help immigrants with any issues that arise. Social work practice is guided by an evidence-based practice[vii]. It is therefore imperative that social workers be guided by social research, that is evident in the literature. Consequently, with the knowledge that volunteering is beneficial to volunteers and organisations, social workers could benefit from the findings of this research in order to promote this type of work to migrants/asylum seekers in order to enhance their wellbeing and promote integration into Irish society. This research will also create an awareness for social workers of the barriers that may impede immigrants from partaking in voluntary activities and enable them to overcome these barriers.

[vii] Evidence-based practice refers to the structuring of social work practice on the basis of evidence.

5.5 Reflection on Research Journey:

Having never completed a research piece before, initially I was apprehensive about the whole process. I felt even more pressure as it was a CARL project. However, it has been a privilege and an eye opener. My community liaison partner Julie has been very trusting (letting me get on with my work) and extremely helpful throughout the whole process. I feel like I have been on a rollercoaster ride to get to this point, there have been some highs and some lows, where I thought I would never make it on time and then disappoint everyone on the CARL project. Yet here I am, finished!

My research supervisor told me that often when you expect something to happen the unexpected happens. How right he was. I expected more migrants from an asylum-seeking background to come forward for the research, but it didn't work out that way. I panicked a little at first, but I realised that this only helped to guide my research in the way it did. For the participants who did come forward I am very grateful that you all took the time out of your busy schedules to help with this research. You provided me with a depth of information and a path to follow with that information. Thank you.

I realised that I have never been more determined to do something than I was throughout this whole process. I really enjoyed it and I feel that it has sparked something within me to complete more projects/research like this in the future. I hope that my work will inform others and add to the wealth of literature that is already there in relation to volunteering and migrants. Thank you to all who helped me along the way, especially the participants.

<div align="center">Gracias, धन्यवाद, متشكّرين, Thank you!</div>

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RESEARCH PROJECT

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

School of Applied Social Studies
Staidéar Sóisialta Feidhmeach

NAME OF STUDY:

"A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE BENEFITS OF AND THE BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING FOR MIGRANTS."

Are you:

- A Non-Irish National?
- Is English not your first language?
- Do you have a good working knowledge of English?
- Have you previously or are you currently volunteering?

What is required of participants?

- 1 hour of their time to attend a face-to-face interview, to answer questions about their volunteering experiences.

When:

Interviews will take place during the month of February in the Cork Volunteer Centre between 9am and 5pm at a time and day that suits you.

CONTACT DETAILS:
Name: Nichola Dressel
Email: 98409298@umail.ucc.ie
Telephone: 086-0384134.

volunteer centre
Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Corcaigh
CORK

A2: Information for Participants (Email)

ATTENTION ALL VOLUNTEERS!!

To whom it may concern,

My name is Nichola Dressel. I am a final year Bachelor of Social Work student attending University College Cork. As part of my final year course requirements I am expected to complete a research module. In this respect, I am undertaking a piece of research titled

"*A qualitative exploration of the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering for migrants.*"

 I am contacting you to humbly invite you to participate in this study. This study is being carried out through University College Cork's, school of Applied Social Studies by Nichola Dressel.

I am specifically seeking non-Irish nationals, whose first language is not English, who have previously volunteered or are currently volunteering through the Cork Volunteer Centre. As it is a small scale project and there is no funding available to provide interpreters, I am requesting that each participant has a good working knowledge of English.

Volunteers will be asked to participate in a one-to one interview for approximately 1 hour in which the participants will be asked a number of interview questions related to their volunteering experience. The interviews will be held in Cork Volunteer Centre and will be audio-recorded. This study will help Volunteer and Community Organisations to have a better understanding of migrant's experiences of volunteering.

If you are interested in participating in this study please let me know and specific times and dates, that suit participants, can be arranged to conduct interviews.

I can be contacted by email at this address 98409298@umail.ucc.ie or by phone at 086-0384134. My academic supervisor, Dr. Joe Whelan from the school of Applied Social Studies, can be contacted by email at joseph.whelan@ucc.ie

Please note the following information: The results will be presented in the dissertation. They will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The dissertation may be read by future students on the course. The study may be published in a research journal. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Kind regards,

Nichola Dressel.

A3: Consent Form

"A qualitative exploration of the benefits of and the barriers to volunteering for migrants."

Student Name: Nichola Dressel.

- I agree to be interviewed as part of the research study outlined above.
- The purpose of the research study has been explained to me and I understand it.
- I am participating voluntarily.
- I give permission for my interview to be recorded.
- I understand that the recording and transcript of the interview will be kept in a safe place and only the researcher will have access to them.
- I am aware that extracts from the interview may be used in reports, publications or other forms of communication arising from the research.
- Unless stated otherwise, my name and other identifying details will be kept anonymous in any reports, publications or other communications arising from the project. This means that my name would not be attached to them or made available to the public or to other researchers.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time either prior to the interview, during the interview or after the interview.
- I understand that I can with withdraw permission to use the data within two weeks of completing the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I understand that I do not have to answer any questions I do not wish to answer.

(Please tick one box:)

I agree to take part in this research and agree to publication/quotation of extracts from my interview. ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research and do not agree to publication/quotation of extracts of my interview. ☐

Date: _____

Signature of Interviewee_____

Name (block capitals) _____

A4: Interview Questions

(1) Tell me about your volunteering journey in Ireland?

(2) Why do you volunteer?

(3) What are the positive aspects of volunteering for you?

(4) Are there negatives that you can think of?

(5) Did you find it difficult to volunteer?

(6) What do you think of the supports provided by your voluntary organisation?

(7) How would you describe your overall experience with the voluntary organisation?

(8) What do you feel you bring to volunteering?

(9) If you were Minister for volunteering, what would you do to make it easier for migrants to volunteer?

(10) Is there anything I should have asked you that I didn't?

A5: Thematic Analysis

Themes	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5
Benefits	• Good for giving back to society. • Utilising time to do something useful. • Manpower • Feels good to be a part of it. • Get to know so many people. • No pressure to attend. • Flexible. • Don't need to be an expert. • Get to experience new things. • Friends can be involved too. • Learn new skills. • Feel productive.	• Get to know more about the community. • Feel a part of the community. • Knew the benefits of volunteering from experience in labour market. • Get out of the house. • Learning new skills. • Opens your mind to challenges others have. • Enlightening. • Possibility of paid work. • Thankful for own life. • Feel valued and rewarded.	• Fun. • Educating others. • Good experience. • Sense of purpose. • Useful to others • Make friends in a new country. • Learn about the culture. • Gives me a sense of fulfilment. • Love the energy. • Work together with others on difficult tasks. • Fits my skills.	• Giving back to a country that has given so much to me. • Get to meet people, build contacts. • Make network bigger. • Fits my skills. • Contributing to society. • Feeling good for myself. • Helps with mental health (own and others). • Feel valuable. • Improving English. • Mutual benefits – 'I am winning' • Professional growth. • No pressure to attend. • Provides a connection to lost loved ones if you could work in an area that you have experienced, e.g. cancer patients.	• Learn about Irish culture, improve knowledge about Ireland. • Gain more experience in qualified field of work. • Prepare for future career, references and CV. • Less stress than being at home with children all the time. • Visa restrictions on labour market so get to work in a different way. • Meet people. • Improve communication, culture and style.
Barriers	• Age restrictions. • Special clubs. • Some voluntary organisations have a membership fee. • Communities like CVC not available in country of origin, so don't know about them in Ireland.	• Not being recognised for the work you do. • No travel expenses • No facilities for tea or coffee. • No resources. • No structure. • Paid work never materialised. • Some companies could reward volunteers better. • Some voluntary jobs are real jobs.	• Thought it would be easier. • Enough volunteer • No response from voluntary organisations. • Garda Vetting – Have to travel to Dublin to own embassy. • Some events could be run better. • Most events take place in Dublin. • Mostly morning hours, not much evening hours. • No supports, no training, no materials to work with.	• No reply from voluntary organisations. • Garda vetting. • Guilty feeling when you can't do something. • Tricky dates e.g. Valentine's a negative for organisations. • Voluntary work not available in the area you would like to work.	• Some people just want to use us. • Some people don't want to teach others. • Communication problems – understanding the Cork accent.

A5: Thematic Analysis contd.

Themes	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5
Difficulties in volunteering	• Needed to do own research on laptop to source voluntary work. • Only through University did I get to know about voluntary organisations.	• Very parochial/male dominated. • Time – not starting on time. • No boundaries – phones on during meetings, not used to that. • Don't get a response from some voluntary organisations.	• No response from some voluntary organisations. • Too many volunteers already. • Unsuitable times. • Garda Vetting from previous country. • Agencies not sending a link for Garda Vetting.	• No reply from some organisations. • Didn't fit my schedule. • Website difficult to work out.	• Yes, there were difficulties, but they were personal difficulties not with the voluntary organisations.
What can be done to make it easier for migrants to volunteer.	• Needs to be advertised more. • Advertise to change mindset. • Increase its presence/popularity. • Volunteering companies are doing their part.	• Too many ways to get into voluntary work – make it more streamlined. • More open days to meet with existing volunteers. • Give a sense of optimism. • Integration with the community.	• Corporate Social Responsibility – should do something useful like build houses. • Get a specific division in Government to handle the process and make it easier – Garda Vetting. • Raise awareness locally. • Make it more accessible. • Advertising – Build a portal website for voluntary activities in colleges, but accessible to public.	• Promote volunteering. • Campaign of good experiences. • Create a slogan 'You can do it' • Recruit more people who feel good about being migrants in Ireland. • Ask people for their skills. • Need to identify where migrants are and bring them in.	• After 2-3, maximum 5 years give them a job or training in the field they like.