



TSC Report:

Improving the stability of the volunteer base of the London chapter of Asha for Education

Alex Harries, Jamie Leurs,
Christopher Thornton, Roberta Tilt

The Problem: Reduced Efficiency

- The organisation is obliged to spend time seeking out and training new volunteers.
- This is because of:
 - Fluctuating volunteer numbers
 - No capacity to pre-empt volunteer changes

Hypothesis & Method

- We hypothesised that the following factors might influence engagement:
 - Make-up of the volunteer base
 - Experience of volunteering with Asha.
 - Asha's organisation/strategy
- We produced a survey using the online resource [survey monkey](#) to test these hypotheses.

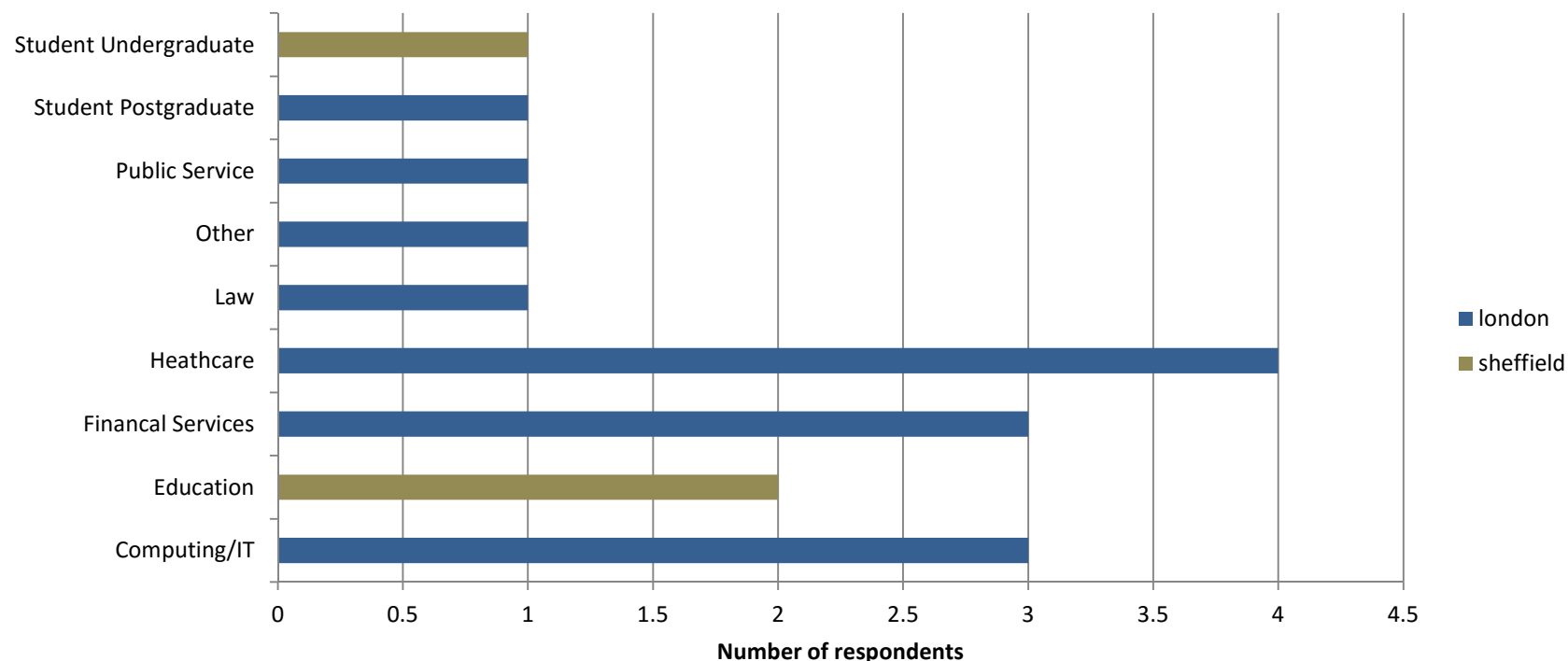
Method

- The survey was split into three sections.
 - **First section:** General information about the respondent
 - **Second section:** This was split into two groups and different questions were asked depending on whether the respondent was still a member of Asha
 - **Third section :** what the respondent generally felt and any other further comments they had about Asha.
- This was sent out to two chapters, the London chapter and the Sheffield chapter.
- It was hoped that by comparing the two chapters in the UK we could remove uncertainties in the data and draw fair conclusions about difference in recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Survey Results

- Unfortunately, responses to the survey were limited.
- Statistically we did not have enough responses to make the finds statistically “significant.”
- However, the results allow us to make some tentative suggestions.

Analysis : London appears to have low levels of student involvement

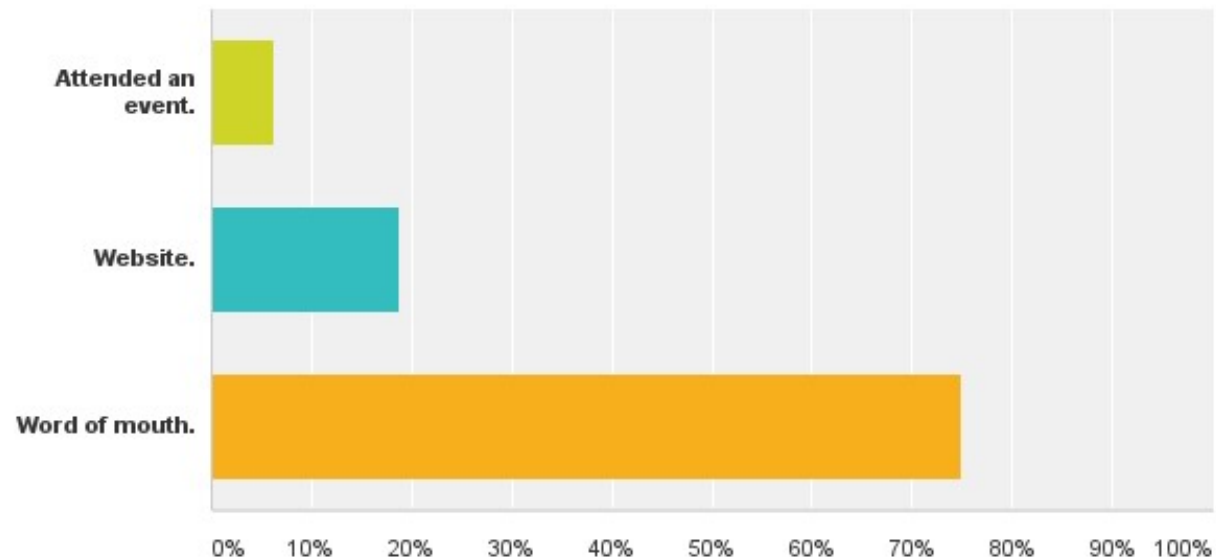


Of the respondents we seem to have a wide mix of people volunteering in London but a more university lead effort in Sheffield. This is not surprising given the demographic of London, it would be more interesting to see in further research if those that have an educational background volunteer for longer. In our limited survey we found this not to be the case.

Analysis : The majority of volunteers hear about Asha through word of mouth

Q3 How did you hear about Asha?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 1

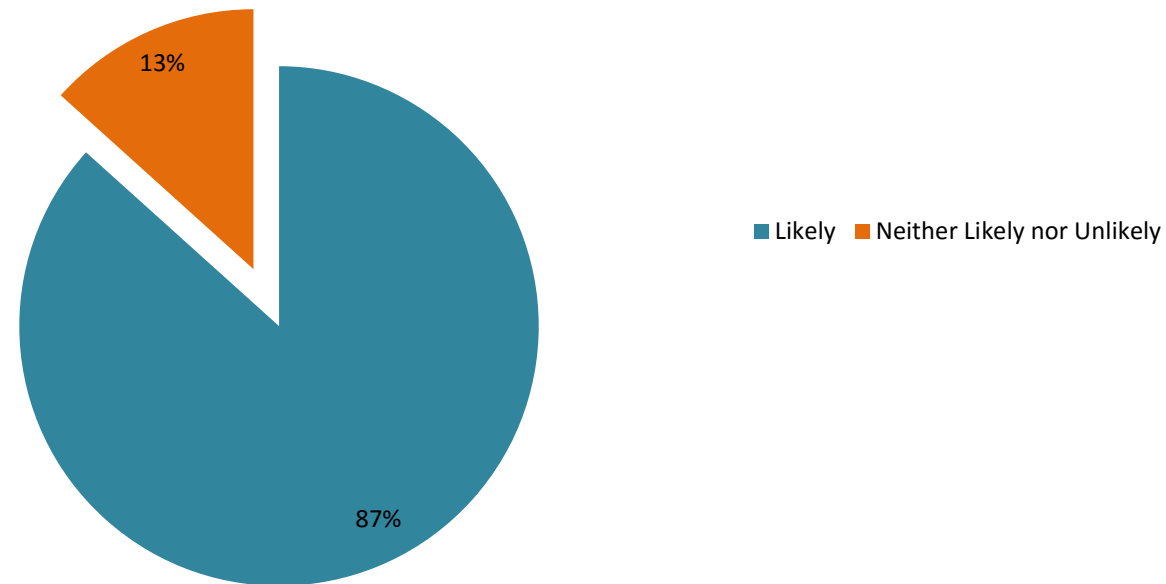


It would appear people become involved in Asha when engaged by a current volunteer. Asha London puts a lot of time and effort on events but it would appear at least from a volunteering perspective this has a limited effect on volunteering numbers.

Analysis : Pratham

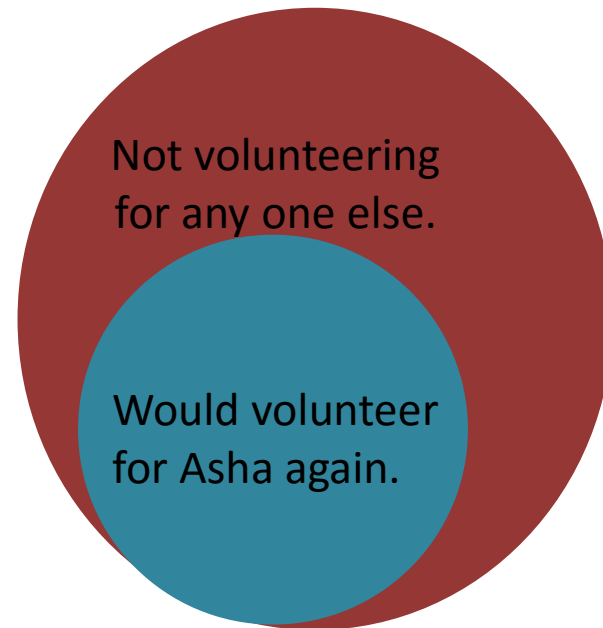
- We investigated the events hosted by Pratham, a similar, if larger, organisation.
- Events focus on fundraising.
- Advertising is used to recruit new volunteers mainly through clear banners on there website.
- Adverts direct people to Pratham's website, providing an alternative to word of mouth.

Analysis : The majority of past volunteers would recommend volunteering with Asha.



In this survey question, we asked “How likely is it that you would recommend volunteering at Asha to someone else”. The results show that most people would recommend volunteering with Asha, if we combine this with the result that people come to Asha through word of mouth then we can see a clear picture of how people come to join the organisation. The question is how do you maintain this and expand on it ?

Analysis : The majority of past volunteers are not volunteering for anyone else



This states quite clearly that even though people leave Asha, it's not to join another volunteering group. This in combination with the fact that this group would volunteer for Asha again seems to suggest that the experience they have does not mean they dislike Asha and seem to be an area of untapped volunteering potential.

Analysis : Some felt that organisation could be improved

- “Should be a bit more organized.”
- “Create a clear plan to engage new volunteers.”
- “Fairly disorganized unfortunately.”

These sorts of comments give a general feel on some potential issues and could be the source of new investigation for future work. However it is important to remember that they often represent a small vocal part of the responses.

Recommendations

- Only a minority of volunteers started volunteering on the back of an event.
- Pratham's experience suggests that this is a general trend
- Focus events on fundraising and explore new forms of marketing.
- Further work could be done to investigate engaging a particular group linked by a common theme such as a University.

Recommendations

- The majority of past volunteers would recommend Asha and do not volunteer for other groups.
- This suggests that people have moved on for personal reasons and not dissatisfaction.
- To try to capitalise on this it's important to keep past volunteers engaged e.g. An alumni newsletter

Recommendations

- Some volunteers criticised Asha's organisation and structure.
- This could be a subject of future TSC work.

Brief recommendations on the survey for future work

- Improvements to the survey
 - Sending out time is important. In the data we collected responses always occurred at the time of sending out. Tuesday would be a much more effective day of doing this.
 - Our style of questions were generally good and we did not ask participants for too much information but future surveys should try to give options that consider the analysis. One example of a flawed question in our survey was allowing participants to put any answer they wished for which chapter they volunteered for. In retrospect this should have been a drop down box restricting the options.

Disclaimer

- The Student Consultancy is a programme of learning and development activities for University of Oxford students. It provides employability skills training and work-based experiences to students whilst at the same time giving free consultancy to local businesses, charities and community organizations (Clients).
- After an initial induction period facilitated by the University of Oxford Careers Service, teams of students undertake short, limited scope projects for Clients.
- Whilst of course the University will do what it can to structure and operate this programme efficiently, it will be appreciated that neither the University nor the student participants will owe any duty of care to Clients; or accept any responsibility for the work undertaken or the advice given in the course of what is a free and amateur service. All liability is therefore disclaimed, to the maximum extent permitted by law.

In particular:

- a) The University and the students do not warrant the accuracy of any information, written or spoken, provide by the student teams, and Clients should not rely on its accuracy to make decisions.
- b) Project teams do not have, or hold themselves out to have, specialist or expert knowledge.
- c) In general, teams should not be expected to spend much time on a client's site; however, if they do, then the health and safety responsibility rests with the Client.
- d) No commitment can be made as to the amount of time students can or will spend on a project as it is understood that this work has to be fitted around their academic obligations that take first priority. Clients and teams will be expected to clarify timing and scope at the start and from time to time during the project.

The students will own the copyright in their reports, but each Client will have a free, irrecoverable, non-exclusive, non-transferable licence to use each report which it commissions, for the purpose of the Client's operations.