

BAME volunteering - analysis

The analysis of the literature review is based on the 3 'talent' components as follows:

Commitment

1. A preference for BAME groups to volunteer within their own communities (meets social needs, status needs and more likely to utilise/apply own skills).
2. The prospect of volunteering in the wider community does not feel 'safe' for a number of reasons:
 - a) volunteer-involving organisation may not 'understand' them and their potential contribution
 - b) fear of implicit/explicit racism
 - c) Potential negative impact on benefits etc.

There are a range of strategies that can be put in place to develop psychological safety, although these tend to be recommended rather than evidenced practice.

Competence

1. There are a significant number of areas where volunteer-involving organisations need skills to effectively engage with BAME volunteers. However, there is a lot of guidance available develop these organisational skills and practices
2. A range of areas of need can be addressed by developing good relationships with BAME communities, as members of these communities are often the key to overcoming the range of barriers identified

Again, there is much recommended rather than evidenced practice in the available research.

Contribution

1. There are a number of ways people can be 'helpless victims' of the situation.
 - a) For prospective BAME volunteers (fear of implicit/explicit racism)
 - b) For current BAME volunteers (fear of implicit/explicit racism)
 - c) For current non-BAME volunteers (unsettled by the engaging of BAME volunteers)

NB There are a number of strategies in place for managing this for BAME volunteering initiatives, however these would apply to current rather than prospective volunteers.

2. The 'psychological safety' issues reduce the likelihood of moving 'bystanders' to 'beneficiaries'. Also, some problems have been created with the need to satisfy funders' requirements to engage with BAME volunteers, resulting in insufficient strategies, resources and insight.
3. There is unrealised potential of engaging with those who could positively influence the situation.

NB The proposed strategies in place for this tend to focus on building relationships with target communities, This also develops the organisation's knowledge/skills to engage with BAME volunteers.

4. There are limited strategies in place to move 'beneficiaries' to 'sponsors'. These could apply to:
 - a) BAME volunteers who have benefited from being engaged as a volunteer, who could influence their own community
 - b) Current volunteers/staff who have benefited from the involvement on BAME volunteers, and who could influence other volunteers/staff and the organisation's decision-makers

Overall, those responsible for the organisation need to know why they should be engaging with BAME volunteers, and supporting this with organisational values and strategy.

BAME volunteering – further areas for research

The above analysis has highlighted a number of gaps in research, strategies and initiatives to encourage volunteering within BAME communities.

These gaps have been framed as further research questions to be explored with relevant volunteer-involving organisations and practitioners. Further, a model of human resource management (Ulrich 1998) has been adapted to portray the trends of the current gaps in BAME volunteering research, strategies and initiatives.

