



THE CENTRE FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Progress Report for Mr Anthony Nutt BA

August 2018 – July 2019

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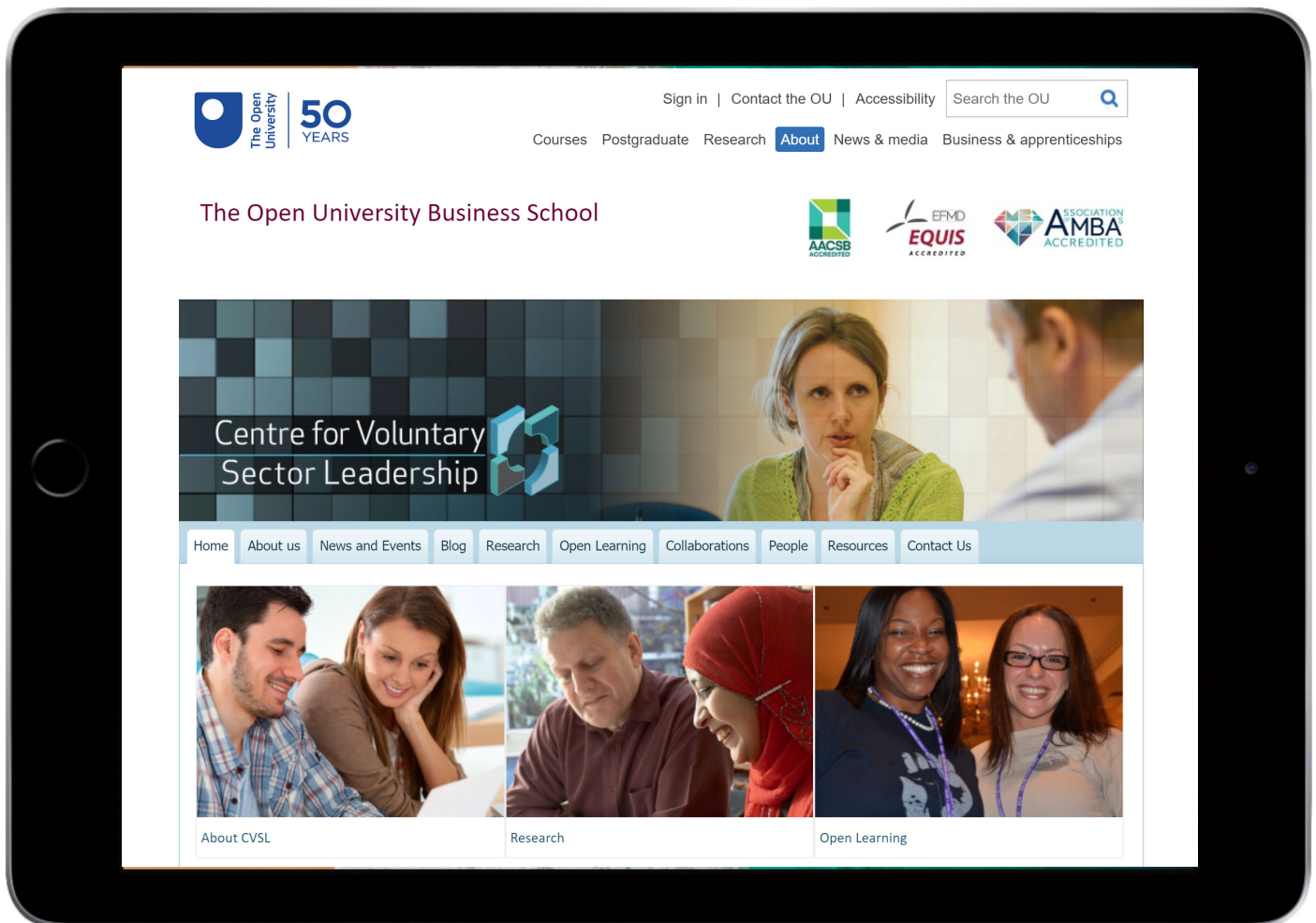
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This is the fourth annual report from The Open University Business School's Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership (CVSL). The Centre of Excellence was established in August 2015. The Centre was developed to work collaboratively with stakeholder groups across academic, practitioner and policy communities to advance the gain an understanding of the complex issues that voluntary organisations are facing.

This report provides an account of the activities and outcomes for the period 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019, against the original objectives agreed at the outset of the project, these are:

1. Establish The Open University Business School as a trusted source of expertise in leadership development thinking for the voluntary sector in the UK.

2. Lead on new areas of research where there are significant leadership knowledge and solutions-based gaps.
3. Provide free and flexible leadership development opportunities that meet the priority needs of the Sector.
4. Ensure that all best practice and new thinking is disseminated as effectively as possible.

The Open University (OU) would like to thank Mr Anthony Nutt for his generous support of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership. This support has been, and continues to be, vital in the advancement of research and practice for the voluntary sector.

DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION



We are pleased to report on another very busy year of activity for CVSL, in which we have continued to build a solid foundation for the Centre, making considerable progress in our research, educational and engagement activities. This report marks the point at which Anthony

Nutt's initial three year investment comes to an end, so it's a good time to reflect on our initial achievements and explain how we intend to take CVSL forward. As this report makes clear, we view this initial three year period as a platform for CVSL's longer-term existence and impact on the sector.

In other ways too, this is a time of transition as I move on to another role outside the Open University and hand over the Directorship of CVSL to Carol Jacklin-Jarvis. This report therefore provides an opportunity for Carol to begin to outline the next phase of CVSL's work. Carol is consulting with colleagues on a draft strategy for the next three years – introduced briefly overleaf.

We are also very proud of our achievements in the three broad areas of CVSL's work:

- **Research:** the initial research projects initiated within CVSL, and also funded by external research funders, has been completed, published (or is due to be published in late 2019) and is also continuing to make an impact within the sector.
- **Free leadership courses:** continuing work to ensure the courses reach a wide audience; building on courses through local leadership clubs; piloting bespoke leadership development in a national organisation; and a new course in early 2019 created in partnership with Volunteer Scotland
- **Widespread societal engagement:** in the first three years we have devoted much time to engaging with partners both locally and nationally. We have presented CVSL's activity at many events large and small, including in Scotland and Wales, engaged intensively with partners at local and national levels, and supported a range of organisations to bid for resources for leadership activities. We contributed to a national review of leadership in the sector, and act as a member of the Office for Civil Society's working group on leadership in the social sector.

We are also really proud of the progress made by our PhD students. They have contributed strongly to the research environment of the Centre, for example, in researching different aspects of service delivery and leadership, in exploring social value and commissioning of services, Three of our students showcased their work at our Annual Conference in July 2019, and a fourth was central to initiating, co-designing and co-creating our new course Engaging Volunteers in partnership with Volunteer Scotland (see below).

As well as the core team of academics we have the privilege of working with a number of Visiting Fellows who enhance our ability to reach and engage with external audiences. Fidèle Mutwarasibo has continued to play a central role in implementing our 'Learning Clubs' in Milton Keynes, which now look set to be rolled out to other areas of England and Scotland. We also benefited from the input of Helen Britton who has been actively promoting the courses and seeking partnerships in the North of England and the Midlands.

We also want to give a heartfelt thanks to CVSL Research Fellow Rebecca Ince who joined CVSL in September 2018 and worked closely on the Mental Health Crisis project, as well as supporting the team with course promotion and initiating a new project on 'wellbeing hubs'. We wish her well with the PGCE that she is embarking on in September 2019.

The following report details the progress that we have made this year across our areas of activity. It has been a pleasure to work with colleagues in CVSL in a variety of ways and I am delighted with the progress the team has made, particularly its developing spirit of working with and for the voluntary sector. We all look forward to another exciting year ahead.

Dr James Rees

Director of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership to July 2019

FROM OUR NEW DIRECTOR



I am delighted to take on the mantle of director for this next stage of CVSL's development, although sad to say farewell to James Rees who leaves the OU in August 2019 for a new role at Wolverhampton University. We are grateful for James's leadership and for the culture of engaged research that he has nurtured in the Centre. Over the next three years, we will focus on embedding and extending this work. Our draft aims for 2019-22 are:

- To build, embed, and sustain CVSL's position within voluntary sector practice and academic communities – in the UK and beyond; and within the OU.
- To extend CVSL's leadership development offer to sector organisations.
- To develop a diversity of funding streams that reinforce CVSL's identity as a teaching and research centre that is engaged in and impacts on practice, and that sustain CVSL into 2022 and beyond.
- To engage in research that focuses on the central topics of:
 - Leadership of voluntary and community organisations – with leadership here broadly conceptualised to look beyond position and beyond organisational boundaries
 - Collaboration between voluntary organisations and with the state
 - Smaller voluntary organisations, with a focus on how they are led and managed, and how they contribute to leadership of place, policy field, and issue.

To achieve these aims, we will continue to develop learning opportunities, engaging with the sector and partners to increase awareness of these opportunities. We will increase our social media activities, refresh our leadership courses, and explore the potential to internationalise CVSL's learning resources. We will also continue to embed CVSL's insights and case examples into the OU's mainstream curriculum.

On the research front, we will initially prioritise small research and knowledge exchange projects, while exploring the potential for future bidding. We will also focus on disseminating findings from the projects we have worked on over the last three years. In addition, we look forward to seeing our first PhD students

complete their work during this coming year, and to extending our knowledge base as they disseminate their findings.

We are delighted that CVSL will contribute to evidencing the impact of the work of the Faculty of Business and Law through a REF impact case. This illustrates how CVSL's work is now embedded in the faculty's work and research environment. This provides a strong basis for CVSL's future sustainability.

Dr Carol Jacklin-Jarvis

Director of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership from August 2019

RESEARCH UPDATES: MAKING AN IMPACT

Rigorous and policy-relevant research is at the heart of CVSL's approach as it sets us apart from other leadership development opportunities to the sector. This approach is starting to bear fruit, as we have seen throughout 2018-2019. This research summarises key research projects from the first three years of the Centre's work. Research papers and summaries are available via CVSL's website or from the CVSL team.

Research in the first three years of CVSL

The Value of Small

This project, a partnership between CVSL, Sheffield Hallam University and research charity IVAR, the research was launched at a high profile event in London in June 2018. Colleagues and invited speakers set out the distinctive contribution and value of small and medium-sized charities (SMCs) operating at a local level in England and Wales.

The in-depth 18-month project, funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales (LBFEW), involved four case studies in Bassetlaw, Ealing, Salford and Wrexham with more than 150 people participating through a series of workshops and interviews. James Rees, Vita Terry and Carol Jacklin-Jarvis led on research in North Nottinghamshire.

The research has proved to be influential, being part of a vigorous debate at the time of its launch concerning the role and contribution of charity to society, and the ways in which its distinctive position and voice is being threatened by funding reductions and competitive approaches to funding allocation.

LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION
England & Wales 

Voluntary Sector Role in Mental Health Crisis Services

CVSL's James Rees and research fellow Rebecca Ince were both centrally involved in this project between 2016 and 2019. Funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), and led by Birmingham University, 'Investigating the contribution of the voluntary sector to mental health crisis care in England' has been a highly topical and in-demand project focused on understanding the role and contribution of the

voluntary sector to crisis services.

The research has found that there is an emerging crisis care 'system' which involves multiple organisations across the public and voluntary sectors, but there remain many gaps that service users unfortunately can fall through. The research involved a national survey and also more detailed case study research in four diverse areas of the country, and when it is published in late 2019 will make recommendations for the NHS other public sector agencies to improve how they work with voluntary sector crisis services to ensure that people in a mental health crisis can get the right help at the right time.

The research is also notable for the fact that the research team worked with five co-researchers who are people with lived experience of mental health crisis, and this has been incredibly successful in enriching the research approach.

See the project website for further de-tails: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/social-policy/departments/health-services-management-centre/research/projects/2016/Voluntary-sector-research/The-contribution-of-the-voluntary-sector-to-mental-health-crisis-care-in-England.Asp>

Probation Service Reforms

James Rees and Vita Terry from CVSL under-took in-depth research into the voluntary sector's experience of probation service re-forms known as the Transforming Rehabilitation programme.

A three-year research project called TrackTR culminated in a third and final report, 'Under represented, Under pressure, Under re-sourced', published on 8 May 2018. This saw James and Vita, together with Rob Macmillan from Sheffield Hallam University, talk to 132 voluntary organisations directly and indirectly affected by the £900m Government pro-gramme to change the way offenders are supervised before and after they leave prison.

There are 11 recommendations in the final TrackTR report which used surveys and interviews to track the role and experience of voluntary organisations in the new rehabilitation system. It states that charities are under-represented in the programme and that the voluntary sector's services are under pressure and under resourced, and charitable funds are being used to deliver the quality of services wanted and needed from the probation service.

The TrackTR project is in association with Clinks, the umbrella body for voluntary organisations working with offenders and their families, and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), as well as the University of Birmingham's Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC).

EU3Leader: Fostering a new European profession – the Entrepreneurial Third Sector Leader (funded by Erasmus+)

CVSL was a 'Knowledge Partner' in this multi-partner European network project. The aim of the project was to create a framework for promoting entrepreneurial leadership in third sector organisations across Europe, and to test and compile training approaches by engaging with leaders in a variety of settings. CVSL led the initial work packages on presenting the 'state of the art' in leadership as well as working closely with colleagues at WU in Vienna on a survey of leadership challenges and available resources and initiatives across Europe. The resulting reports have been published on the Euclid project website (<http://euclidnetwork.eu/portfolio-posts/eu3leader/>) – but also influenced the development of our leadership briefing papers published on the CVSL website.

In March 2019 CVSL led a new project proposal to take forward the work with the project partners - dubbed EU3Leader2. The proposal was submitted to Erasmus+ (along-side another proposal led by a Spanish partner on digital skills in the third sector), and would fund the partnership to develop the frame-work into a suite of leadership development resources. As of September 2019 we are yet to hear the outcome of these proposals - they may well have been caught up in the wider uncertainty surrounding the UK's future relationship with the EU.

Migrant Third Sector Organisations



Vita Terry, together with OU colleague Sara de Jong from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), have been awarded nearly £2,500 from the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account Knowledge Ex-change Dialogues Scheme through the University of Oxford for a project entitled 'Knowledge

brokers in migrant third sector organisations'. The project, submitted as part of the Citizenship and Governance strategic research area (SRA), brings together three academics with both research and practice-based expertise regarding migration and the third sector to facilitate a workshop with a range of stakeholders (volunteers, case workers and managers).

Vita has worked as policy advisor of the Employability Forum and has provided support for destitute asylum seekers as a volunteer with the Red Cross. Sara has volunteered with Refugee Action, Yarl's Wood Befrienders and a women asylum seekers support group. In addition, Jacqui Broadhead (University of Oxford) managed the Refugee and Migrant Team at Islington Council. The workshop will aim, through interactive exercises, to foster knowledge exchange between academics and practitioners in order to identify how refugee and migrant front-line staff can most effectively broker knowledge between service users and (non-migrant) staff.

Collaborative Leadership

The study focusing on 'collaborative leadership' enacted by individuals in a context of austerity and turbulence, is still ongoing. In collaboration with international researchers in Canada and the US, Siv Vangen co-organised a 'collective leadership, research findings workshop' at McGill University in Montreal in May 2018. Informed by her ongoing programme of research on inter-organisational collaboration, the paper she presented there draws on empirical research aimed at understanding better the practice of collaborative leadership as it is enacted by experienced 'collaborative leaders' in UK public sector children's services.

To further extend our understanding of how collaborative leadership is practiced in context characterised by austerity policies and turbulence, visiting fellow, Dr Janet Diamond has undertaken a second round of interviews with senior individuals working collaboratively to tackle cross-cutting societal challenges in increasingly efficient ways. A paper, which describes the complexity of relational leadership in these contexts and the tensions that arise from the inevitable different and sometimes contradictory needs

of different stakeholders across the various sectors and organisations in currently under review. An abridged version of the paper will feature as a CVSL blog in due course.

A second project on the topic of Collaborative Leadership was undertaken by Carol Jacklin-Jarvis, James Rees and Vita Terry, exploring the application of the concept of collaborative leadership in the voluntary sector context, engaging with six practitioners over a 12 to 18 month period. Early findings were reported at the International Studying Leadership conference in December 2018. A further development of the findings will be presented at the annual Voluntary Sector and Volunteering conference in September 2019 and written up for publication in 2020.

Wellbeing Hubs - Exploratory Research

In early 2019 Dr James Rees and Dr Rebecca Ince conducted a scoping study into the involvement of the voluntary sector in Wellbeing Hubs in England, funded by the OU's Wellbeing HRA. Wellbeing Hubs have become an increasingly prominent part of the landscape of provision of welfare services. Wellbeing Hubs are a localised model in which a voluntary or community organisation acts as a central point of access or platform for access to a range of community services, support and social activities. The study sought to explore the drivers behind the proliferation of such Hubs in the UK, understand the range of Hubs currently active or in development, and explore the effects such models have on the organisations involved, the communities they serve and the implications for further development of welfare services in the UK. Members of CVSL, including several PhD students, took part in a collaborative 'sandpit' event with research participants and other academics in early July.

Comparative Research Across Policy Fields

This exploratory project undertaken by Carol Jacklin-Jarvis and Dr. Karen Potter is beginning to uncover similarities and differences between welfare voluntary organisations and those in the environmental domain. It aims to transfer knowledge about collaborative working between the two fields. The project is at an early stage of development. Early findings and pointers for future research have been reported in Voluntary Sector Review and at the annual Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research conference in September 2019.

PhD students

We have five PhD students associated with the Centre, and have attracted a new student in 2019.

The contribution of leadership in small and medium charities: navigating change and transition

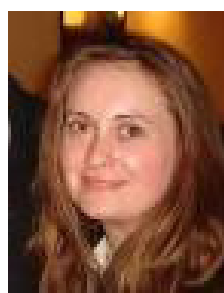
Sally Vivyan began her PhD studies in February 2019. Sally's research project is supervised by Carol Jacklin-Jarvis and Nik Winchester and James Rees. The project aims to extend and deepen our knowledge of the types of leadership that might contribute to the sustainability of small and medium charities as they grow over time and undergo transitions through their organisational life-cycle. It will contribute to the discussion concerning a framework for leadership in the UK voluntary sector that has begun in the academic literature. The project will adopt a collaborative and action based approach it will also make a meaningful contribution to leadership practice in small and medium sized UK charities.



Daniel Haslam has made superb progress on his research project "Voluntary Sector Leadership in Cross-sector Collaborations: an NHS Multispecialty Community Provider". NHS multi-speciality providers (MCP) are initiatives that bring together different organisations in order to deliver preventative services in

community settings. They provide an opportunity to research a new way of working that has the potential to be rolled out across the country.

He was thoroughly embedded within a voluntary sector organisation working in an NHS MCP for a 12 month period. This research was ethnographic and so mainly involved the collection of textual data through participant observation. It is clear from his reflections on that data so far that this will form the basis for new insight and contribution to his field of research. Daniel is close to completing his thesis which offers important insights for voluntary organisations in partnering with public sector organisations in health service provision.



Cristina Mititelu is the second Anthony Nutt PhD Studentship working on a project entitled "The commissioning for social value and voluntary sector organisations: tensions in implementation". The research focuses on how both the VSOs and local public

authorities, working in the area of commissioning for social inclusion, interpret the social value, in the light of the Public Service (Social Value) Act 2012, and how they align it with implementation. The research has a qualitative methodological design that aims to clarify, through an inductive approach, the conceptualisation and implementation of social value at a theoretical, policy and practice level. Empirical evidence was gathered from the perceptions of informants at different policy levels, and from different local cases, based in a London borough and an MK local authority commissioned project to a local charity. This will allow us to make sense of varied interpretations of the policy and its implementation.

Cristina is completing data analysis and reported on early findings at the annual Voluntary Sector and Volunteer Research conference.



Ronald Macintyre started later in February 2017 and is working on a PhD entitled “Designing for Openness”. Ronald’s research looks at the de-sign and development of Third Sector Organisations’ online presence. He is at the midpoint of the second year of the PhD

programme. As an experienced designer who works directly with TSOs, at present he is working with a national volunteering organisation to develop a course on Volunteering Management.

Through this engagement with practice he has developed an approach to design as research, and in this empirical phase is looking at research for design, research in de-sign, and research through design. For example, working with organisational partners to develop a series of six workshops to engage a diverse range of stakeholders in conversations about what makes a “good volunteer experience” is research for design. Ronald successfully worked with Volunteer Scotland to launch a new online course Involving Volunteers, co-produced by Volunteer Scotland and CVSL. occasionally blogs about his research here: <https://roughbounds.wordpress.com/>

Akash Puranik commenced his work in 2018, before that he worked as a lecturer on MBA programmes delivered by Glyndwr University and University of Wales, designing and delivering modules for strategy, marketing and business environment. His background in the service and education industry, involvement with numerous charities as well as his personal interest in understanding ethical and moral implications of ‘working together’ inform his research work. The focus of Akash’s doctoral research is on exploring how non-contractual, informal collaborations, set up with the

intention of benefiting communities, are organized. His ethnographic work develops an understanding of such phenomena through an in-depth exploration of exceptional cases. Akash has completed his empirical work and is now writing up his thesis.

Future Plans and Further Research Funding

- Three major bids were submitted in March 2019: first a consortium bid to Horizon 2020 in March 2019 on de-signing social innovations to address urban inequality through Social Innovation Labs (led by Heidelberg University). Second CVSL led a bid to Erasmus+ alongside partners in the EU3Leaders project to take forward the leadership framework and create an operational platform for leadership development across Europe. Finally, CVSL was a partner in a resubmission to Erasmus+ of the EU3Digital project to enhance digital skills in the third sector across Europe.
- CVSL plans to bid in late 2019 to the Power to Change with partners in other UK universities to take forward work on Place Leadership initially developed in the LBF ‘value of small’ project.
- CVSL also has a number of smaller bids in progress, focused on engaged research projects in the sector.

SHOWCASING OUR NEW PARTNERSHIP COURSE: INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS

CVSL's newest course was launched in June 2019 in Volunteer's Week. Created in partnership with Volunteer Scotland, the course was central to CVSL PhD student Ronald Macintyre's research project on design and open learning.

Course Press Release

Volunteer Scotland has joined forces with The Open University to create Involving Volunteering, a digital learning module aimed at improving the volunteering journey.

The new course, officially launched today (Friday 7 June), is a first-time collaboration between Scotland's National Centre for Volunteering and the OU's Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership (CVSL).

Dr James Rees, a Senior Research Fellow and Director of the CVSL, says: "The course covers all of the essential things organisations should consider to ensure volunteers have a positive volunteering experience. Volunteers contribute a massive amount to our society, so it's vital that organisations understand the importance of supporting volunteers and communicating the real difference their contribution makes."

Involving Volunteers is specifically designed to meet the needs of smaller organisations as Adrian Murtagh, Head of Business Development at Volunteer Scotland, explains: "Cost and location can be barriers to continuing professional development in the third sector. This course is free and delivered digitally, making it accessible to those who may not normally be able to access training due to budget and geographical constraints."

On completion of the 14-hour course, all participants will receive a certificate and digital badge to recognise their achievement. You can access it via the course link or by searching for 'Involving Volunteers' on OpenLearn Create.

The screenshot shows the OpenLearn Create website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the OpenLearn Create logo and a search bar. Below that, a breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Courses > Collections > Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership > Involving Volunteers. The main content area features the course title 'Involving Volunteers' in large, bold letters. To the right of the title, there's a blue icon representing a document and the text 'Free statement of participation on completion'. Below the title is a large image showing the logos for the Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership and Volunteer Scotland. To the right of the main content, there's a sidebar with the following information: 'About this course' section listing '14 hours study' and 'Level 1: Introductory'; a 'Ratings' section showing five stars and '5 out of 5 stars'; a 'Create an account to get more' section with a 'Create an account' button; and a 'Download course' section with a 'Download this course for use offline or for other devices.' button and a 'Course formats' dropdown menu.

EXTERNAL EVENTS AND NATIONAL AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT WORK

National Engagement

The CVSL Director (formerly James Rees, now Carol Jacklin-Jarvis) is working closely with Government through Office for Civil Society Leadership Working Group.

CVSL has had several opportunities to engage at the national level in Scotland, including e.g. events with OUIS in 2018/19; and at an ACOSVO event and The Gathering in the autumn of 2018.

CVSL has begun the process of evaluating the impact and reach of our work, to assess where there are gaps for further development.

Creation of Facilitator Pack

CVSL colleagues have created a facilitator pack that acts as a resource for facilitators to support local learning clubs. Locally facilitated learning clubs offer a blended learning approach to CVSL's leadership courses. Learners study as a group, meeting at key points in the courses, sharing their learning, interacting together in the online discussions, and encouraging one another to complete. In the course of their learning, they build a local learning community that builds capacity for future local leadership development.

Local Leadership Development Packages



Building on the successful delivery of CVSL's first learning club in Milton Keynes, Fidèle Mutwarasibo (pictured) is now facilitating the delivery of a learning club with managers at Willen Hospice. 'Local Learning Club II' will commence in September 2019. Fidele is also developing future clubs with

Community Foundations UK and a group of Yorkshire-based organisations.

CVSL also continues to work with potential partners in Scotland and the Midlands (amongst others) to extend learning clubs into further local communities.

Bespoke Leadership Development

Owain Smolovic Jones, Carol Jacklin-Jarvis and Nik Winchester delivered a bespoke leadership development package for The Children's Society. We delivered five face to face sessions, wrapping additional research-informed content and learning activities around the online courses. We were also able to gather feedback from our learners that will inform future course development.

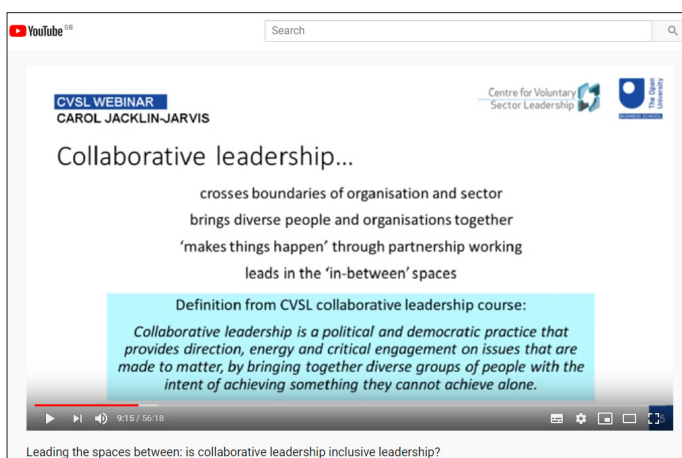


CVSL team members are in discussion with potential partners to develop and deliver further bespoke leadership packages. We aim to deliver at least one externally funded package in 2019-20, in addition to our work at Willen Hospice.

Events at which CVSL members have taken part

- NCVO-VSSN Research Conference, Nottingham, 6-7 September 2018. CVSL presented their work including a joint presentation on leadership and collaboration, and findings from the LBF EW 'value of small' research. PhD students also attended the conference and presented in the New Researchers stream.
- Erasmus+ Training Event in Edinburgh, 11 September 2018. Vita Terry and James Rees attended, further testing approaches to blended learning on collaboration and financial sustainability, with a range of partners including Euclid, OU in Scotland, SCVO and Acosvo
- Erasmus+ Partner meeting, Rijeka, 24-25 September 2018. James Rees and Ronald Macintyre took part at which the team collectively reflect on the progress we have made in piloting blended learning across Europe.
- James Rees presented the findings of the Value of Small research to local stakeholders and voluntary organisations in Bassetlaw, Nottinghamshire in order to sustain engagement with one of our research sites (Oct-Nov 2018).
- James Rees presented to a diverse range of civil society representatives, and "community learning champions" in Glasgow with Open University in Scotland, December 2018.

- James Rees presented implications of CVSL's work to the Office for Civil Society, October 2018.
- Carol Jacklin-Jarvis and James Rees presented research on collaboration and collective leadership as the International Studying Leadership Conference returned to Lancaster University Management School to explore 'The Power of Leadership?' on 16-18 December 2018.
- James Rees delivered a short 'pro-vocation' on Leadership and CVSL's role in the debate at the TSRC conference in Birmingham, February 2019
- Carol Jacklin-Jarvis presented CVSL's learning offer and a brief insight on our work on collaboration and leadership at The Gathering with the OU in Scotland.
- Rebecca Ince, James Rees, and Carol Jacklin-Jarvis hosted a 'sand-pit' workshop for research participants in the Wellbeing Hubs research project, at the Open University Library on 4 June 2019.
- CVSL hosted its third webinar entitled 'Leading the Spaces Between: the promise of collaborative leadership' on 23 July, with Fozia Irfan, Chief Executive of Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation, Carol Jacklin-Jarvis and chaired by James Rees. A link is available on the CVSL website.



The CVSL website links to recordings of the Centre's webinars

SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE: JULY 2019

This year's activities closed with CVSL's second annual CVSL conference which took place at the OU on 9 July 2019. The event aimed to showcase the research and educational work of CVSL and particularly highlighted our engagement work, as well as to be interactive and encourage audience input into the priorities for CVSL's next three years.

Highlights of the 2019 CVSL conference

This year, the conference was part of the larger Festival of Business and Law to mark the OU's 50th birthday celebrations, called *Collaboration and leadership: making it happen*. These sentiments were echoed by Professor Siv Vangen, the Centre's Founding Director and current Chair, who said the Centre had "no fixed definition of leadership" and that leadership can refer simply to "making something happen".

Prominent local charity fundraiser Sue Farrington Smith MBE was the keynote speaker at the 2019 conference. The Chief Executive of Milton Keynes-based Brain Tumour Research, who was central to the foundation of the charity a decade ago, she spoke passionately about her life and drawing on her own career experiences to illustrate how others might learn to deliver 'inspired leadership'.

Sue has been campaigning to raise awareness and funds since 2001 when the loss of her seven-year-old niece with a brain tumour prompted the 'Ali's Dream' charity. She was then the catalyst in 2009 for multiple charities coming together to launch Brain Tumour Research, leading her to be able to contribute strongly on one of CVSL's core educational themes on collaboration.

Brain Tumour Research's growth in the following decade has been impressive – raising 'just' £6,000 in the year ending 2009, compared to £3.4 million in fundraising in 2018, and from a handful of initial volunteers to 38 staff at present – with continuous improvement at the forefront of what they do.

Dr James Rees reflected on the achievements of the first three years highlighting how proud we are of the free online open and flexible courses, together with our sustained engagement with the voluntary sector, our various research outputs and the work of our talented research students.

Carol Jacklin-Jarvis and Visiting Fellow Dr Fidèle Mutwarasibo also presented a detailed report on two projects to support and enhance leadership in the voluntary sector – a Milton Keynes Local Learning Club pilot scheme, and a Leadership Learning Club



Sue Farrington Smith MBE receives a £500 donation for her Brain Tumour Research charity from Professor Siv Vangen

with the Children's Society. There are plans for future collaboration with Willen Hospice, UK Community Foundations, and Yorkshire First (based in North Yorkshire).

Four PhD students – Akash Puranik (on informal collaborations), Daniel Haslam (voluntary sector with the NHS), Lindsay Wilson-Jones (governance and leadership on boards, using Riding for the Disabled as an example), and Cristina Mititelu (social value in commissioning and procurement) – then showcased their research and took a range of questions, in a session that was both lively and much remarked upon by participants as showing the breadth of research being undertaken in the Centre.

The final session (before networking and drinks) involved some further audience participation - with CVSL posing a trio of questions: What do charities need and want from leadership development?; How do we better reach small charities?; and How do we make leadership more diverse?

Gamiel Yafai, a Managing Director who is also a volunteer trustee of The Parks Trust, was an invited speaker to discuss the third point, particularly with Milton Keynes having such a large diverse population. After some interesting feedback was offered, which will be collated and shared with attendees, there was a final opportunity to network.

LOOKING FORWARD: FUTURE PRIORITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Throughout the first three years CVSL has focused on building its profile through establishing a robust network, which includes local and national charities, national bodies and member organisations, academics and ambassadors. To date, key sector bodies engaged with have included NCVO, Navca, Cranfield Trust, Small Charities Coalition, and local sector infrastructure bodies.



Course Refresh

In the autumn of 2019, we will refresh the leadership courses and migrate them to the OU's Openlearn platform, embedding them firmly in the OU's free resources for longer term sustainability and profile. We will build our social media profile, tweeting from @OU_Pulse @OUBSchool and @Carol_CVSL and using #OU_CVSL. We will link with the Business School's external engagement work, reaching our network of over 90,000 alumni.

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| <p>Involving volunteers</p> <p>This is a short course on volunteering developed by Volunteer Scotland and the Centre for Voluntary Sector...</p> <p>Read more ></p> | <p>Introducing leadership in voluntary...</p> <p>This free course, Introducing leadership in voluntary organisations, provides an opportunity for people who...</p> <p>Read more ></p> | <p>Collaborative leadership in...</p> <p>This free course, Collaborative leadership in voluntary organisations, will help you to reflect on and develop...</p> <p>Read more ></p> | |

CONCLUSION



The work of the Centre over the three years of funding has been varied and extensive. We have worked with a wide range of organisations and taken part in a number of events to establish the Centre's reputation and expertise within the voluntary sector, and within the academic community focused on practice in voluntary organisations. The recruitment of PhD students has enabled the Centre to support the development of early-career academics who will go on to contribute to the sector for years to come. Our research and educational activities have been extensive and a growing number of enquirers are engaging with our courses and resources, and looking to CVSL for advice and support on leadership issues in the sector. CVSL's growing reputation has attracted further PhD students who will continue to extend our knowledge on leadership in the sector.

The support we have received from Mr Nutt has enabled the Centre to engage in a level of activity which would not have been possible without the funding. Over the three years we have added other resources to the Centre to maximise the value of the initial investment, including grants from foundations and European funding, and new partnerships with voluntary organisations and other leadership development providers. With a new director on board, we are focused on the future of the Centre. If you have any queries about this report we would be happy to discuss it further.

Once again we want to thank Mr Nutt for his support of the important work made possible by his generous gift.

APPENDIX A

PhD student videos

The student's videos are part of a series in which OU research students discuss their research and degree journey.

Daniel Haslam's video can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9Guw5192g4>

Akash Puranik's video can be viewed here: <https://t.co/9ErQBnH19S>

