



BILINGUAL COMMUNITY RESEARCH

EXPLORING MIGRANT COMMUNITIES **UNDERSTANDING OF, ATTITUDES TO AND** **PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF VOLUNTEERING**

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INTRODUCTION

The Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) funds SIS, via Trust for Developing Communities (TDC) to support engagement with local BME communities and individuals about a topic of their choice.

TDC chose to research **Volunteering within BME communities**.

TDC BME Engagement Workers reached out to community groups and partner organisations, including SIS, inviting them to attend interviews and focus groups about volunteering. Three members from different BME communities were also interviewed 1-to-1 for a case study on the impact of volunteering within their communities.

A report about the results of this engagement work was published in December 2018.

SIS Self-Employed Sessional Linguists formed one of the two focus groups in the BME research. However, **the direct voice of people with language support needs was absent from the study**.

SIS contracted with 5 Bilingual Community Researchers to hold 1-to-1 interviews with people from their language community so that their views could be added to that of the TDC research.

31 individuals speaking 7 languages took part.

HEADLINE FINDINGS FROM MIGRANT INTERVIEWS

Formal volunteering isn't universal and can be perceived as suspicious, degrading and/or offering a poor quality service.

Role Models from within communities can be very inspirational

Poor English might be a barrier to volunteering

Learning new skills and getting "work experience" makes volunteering attractive

There are some cultural and religious imperatives to volunteering and "paying help forward"

Volunteering can reduce social isolation and help people feel connected

Specialist Volunteer Agencies aren't known to migrant communities

Social Care and Health providers could/should encourage volunteering to improve wellbeing

Volunteers with language needs have specific support requirements

Few migrants with language needs are volunteering

Migrants have numerous and varied skills and abilities they could share

Migrants tend to volunteer within their own community

Very few participants said they weren't interested in volunteering but they identified multiple and varied barriers

Time, (especially childcare, work and study) is the primary barrier to volunteering

Lack of knowledge and information is a major barrier to volunteering

RECOMMENDATIONS

The original TDC report made 8 recommendations (in green).

The additional information collected from people with language support needs has helped refine these recommendations for this specific service user group (in blue).

These recommendations are also informed by

SIS *Health Promotions Project* worked with 50 BME/Migrant volunteers (2015- 2019)

TDC BME Volunteering Fair (Mar 2019)

SIS BME and Migrant Volunteering Survey of local VCS organisations (Mar 2019)

TDC *Tarner Multicultural Group* worked with 6 BME/Migrant volunteers (May – July 2019)

1. Volunteering is not a widely known concept within the BME community. Sessions and workshops on volunteering will spread awareness of the importance of volunteering.
2. There is lack of information and resources on volunteering. Signposting people to suitable volunteering opportunities is challenging. Information needs to be clear and easy to navigate.
3. The need and interest of the volunteer is not assessed appropriately. Volunteers feel demotivated and do not take back required skills from volunteering. More engagement with the volunteer and assessing their needs would encourage more and more individuals to volunteer.

Work with a limited number of language communities per year to increase knowledge of volunteering and encourage volunteering to really get to know their needs and aspirations.

Act as a hub for information and distribution of information about volunteering specific to BME and Migrant Communities

Use existing community assets in the form of language specific community groups and social media to promote volunteering.

The existing specialist volunteering agencies aren't known to migrant communities which are more likely to look inward to their communities or to well-known and trusted public service venues.

Make bespoke information and volunteering offers that will meet the needs and aspirations of target communities and show a clear pathway.

- Polish community seemed particularly interested in using volunteering to upskill ready for work
- Farsi community have a cultural and religious imperative to volunteer
- Brazilian Portuguese community have a wish to "pay forward" help they have received

Harness the informal volunteering going on in communities, particular individuals are well known within their communities for giving "help" on particular issues e.g. completing forms, job search, supporting elderly community members, teaching children,

4. Set up and support organised volunteering projects/opportunities for people from BME communities. This will help volunteers to understand the skills they learn and find suitable opportunities.
5. Work with organisations to explore how they can identify, develop and support suitable volunteering opportunities.
6. Organisations often lack simple clear volunteering policy. Sometimes volunteers are not aware of their rights as volunteers.
7. Consider barriers. For example, often childcare becomes a barrier to volunteering. If one person babysits and the others volunteer, it becomes easier for parents to start volunteering.
8. Volunteering should cater to the needs of the volunteer. Parents find it challenging to volunteer outside school hours. Flexibility will allow more parents volunteer in the community.

Work with a limited number of host organisations to help them offer supported volunteering for BME/Migrant communities.

Careful balance the choice of host organisations between general and BME specific, as well as public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

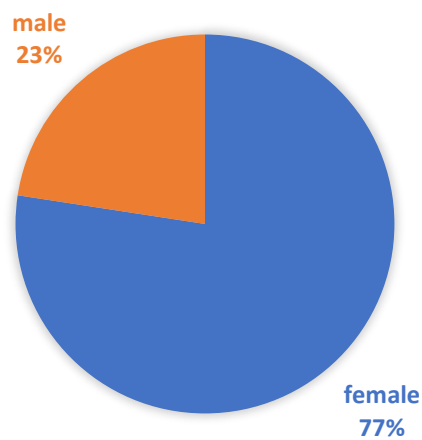
Ensure that the host organisations have opportunities that can be matched to the range of skills people have suggested they can share or want to learn.

Provide support for these organisations to ensure there are **culturally sensitive policies and procedures** in place (included translated information).

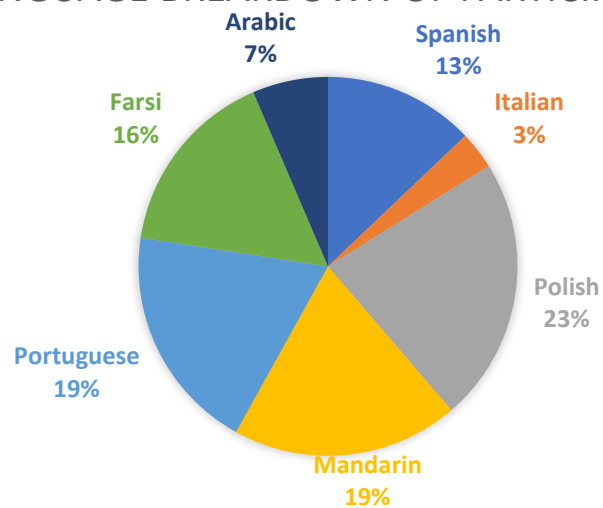
Provide support for these organisations to develop a **casade model of volunteering** with the host organisation committing to a bme/migrant volunteer post with mentoring between incumbent volunteer (as role model and teacher) and their replacement.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF 31 PARTICPANTS

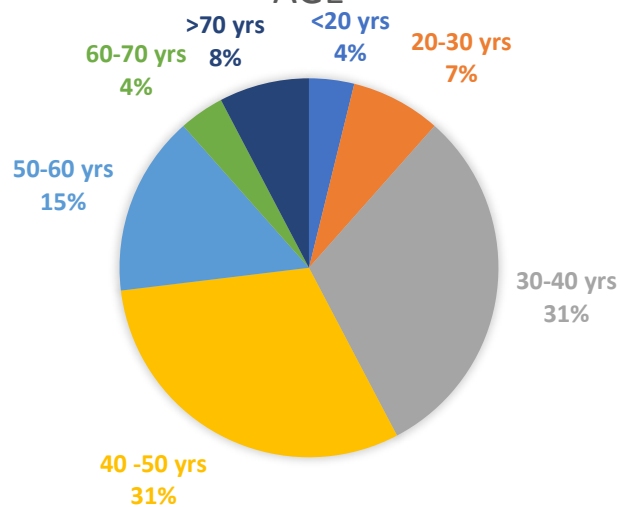
GENDER BREAKDOWN OR PARTICIPANTS



LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS



AGE



EXPLORING ATTITUDES TO AND UNDERSTANDING OF VOLUNTEERING

1. What is volunteering?

Generally good understanding of volunteering

- 77% described doing this for free
- 77% described helping and supporting people
- 27% described formal volunteering within a charity or not for profit setting
- 8% said this was for people who weren't family or friends

There were some cultural differences observed

Farsi speakers said

- *"Volunteering is recommended in my culture"*
- *"According to my culture and religion volunteering is a kind of pray and obligation"*
- *"Volunteering is my cultural heritage"*

Spanish speakers said

- *"I really never came across it in my country, I learnt about volunteering here in England."*
- *"People adapt to a new perception of volunteering as they get used to life in a new country"*

Polish speakers said

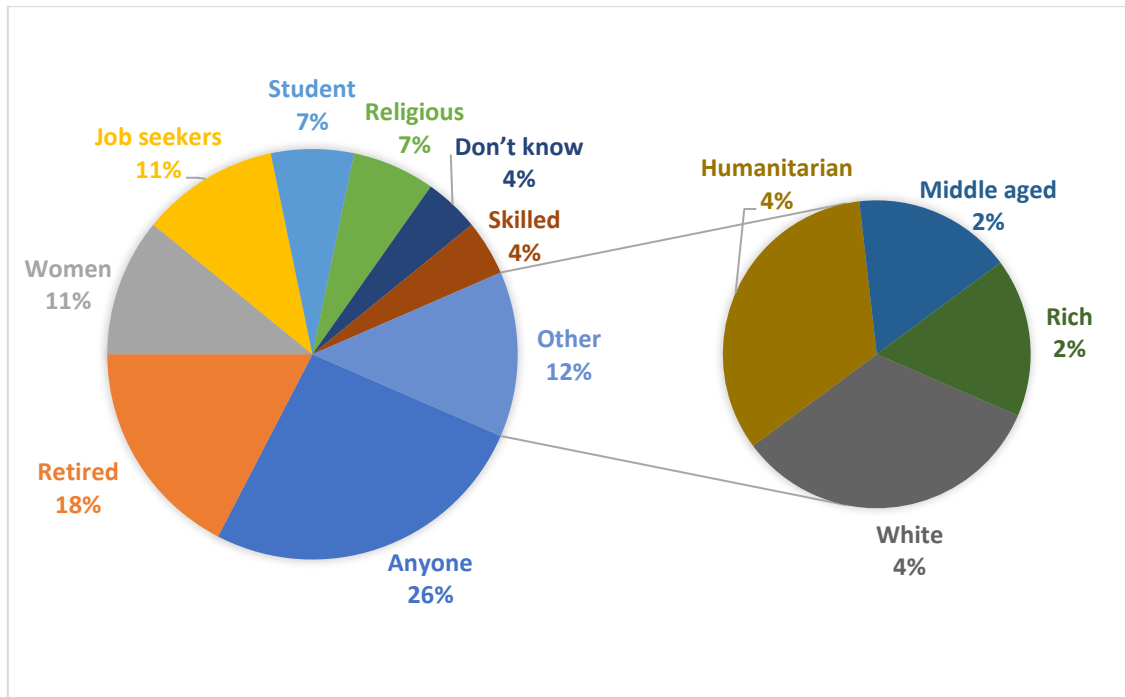
- *"It's a bit suspicious why people are doing this for free"*
- *"I would be suspicious about whether the service offered by a volunteer was going to be as good as a professional"*

There were some misconceptions or indications of poor understanding or information

- 43% used the terms "work" and "job" in their description
- Lack of knowledge about the scope of opportunities
"The only example I can think of volunteering is someone working in a charity shop"
(Portuguese)
- Lack of understanding of the motivation and potential benefits of volunteering
"without expecting anything in return just for their own satisfaction" (Spanish)
- A misconception about the benefits and rewards of volunteering
"In Morocco, the younger generation is starting to recognise the term more. However, it can be seen as degrading to take up a voluntary role after graduating. Some graduates would rather sit at home and wait until a paid opportunity comes up than volunteer." (Arabic)

2. What sort of people volunteer?

Generally a good understanding that anyone can volunteer if they have time

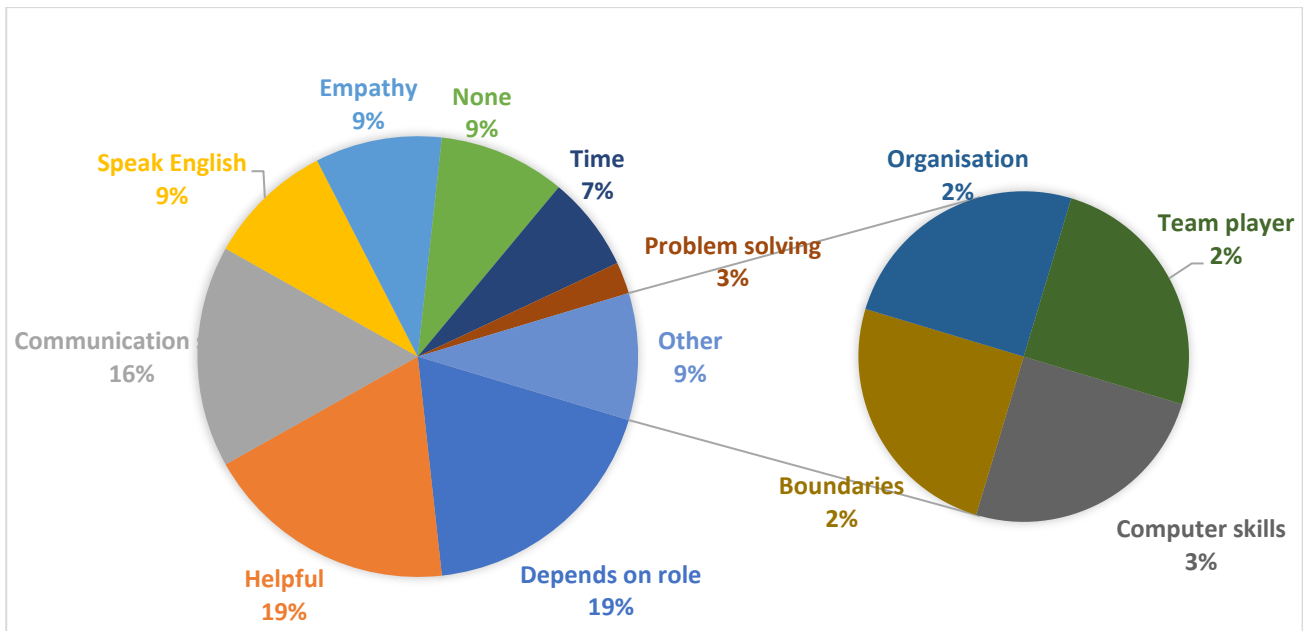


Individual experiences affected attitudes

- An example of how one individual can be a source of inspiration
"There is a lady at our church who is involved with lots of different volunteer work with different charities, helping different groups of needy people, for example collecting clothes and helping the elderly" (Portuguese)
- An example of how one individual can be a source of bias or stereotyping
"We have been to a Food Bank and the volunteers were older, white, women. We don't know any other volunteers."

3. What skills or knowledge do people need to volunteer?

Participants identified personal attributes rather than practical skills are required for volunteering



There was a good understanding that skills can be learnt through volunteering and training

Polish speaking participants in particular mentioned skills could be learnt

- *"None, as often they can learn them through volunteering"* Polish
- *"Lots of other skills could be easily learnt through volunteering"* Polish
- *"Mostly willingness to help others, other things could easily be learnt through volunteering"* Polish
- *"Anybody can learn skills useful to volunteering if they don't have them."* Spanish

Spanish speaking participants in particular talked about the organisations recruiting volunteers

- *"you need to identify with the principles of the organisation you are helping"* Spanish
- *"There are so many different organisations and charities that require different skills"* Spanish

There were concerns that good English would be required, or a lack of English may hold you back

- *"A volunteer needs to speak good English"* Farsi
- *"Good skill in English .. otherwise nothing else stop a real volunteer."* Farsi

4. Why do you think people volunteer?

All common motivational factors for volunteering were identified



There were some cultural differences or migrant specific motivations

Pay it Forward

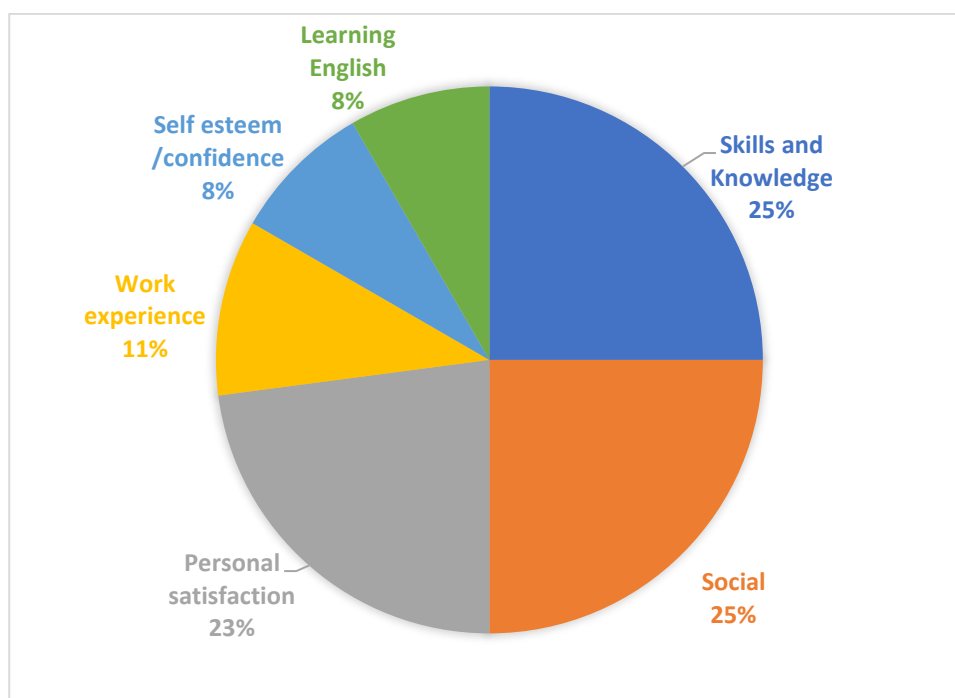
- *"when foreigners arrive in UK, someone helps them to settle here and then that person goes on to help other foreigners who arrive in the future. This happens frequently in the Brazilian community."* Portuguese
- *"they want to pay back for help they received"* Polish
- *"people want to give something back to the community when they have had support"* Mandarin

All Polish speakers all saw volunteering as a way into work

- *"They're interested in obtaining work experience, accessing specialist trainings, building networks and making themselves known"* Polish
- *"They are in the moment in their life when they struggle to find paid and secure employment."* Polish
- *"They mostly would like to obtain work experience to be more attractive for future employers"* Polish

5. What benefits do you think people get from volunteering?

All common motivational factors for volunteering were identified

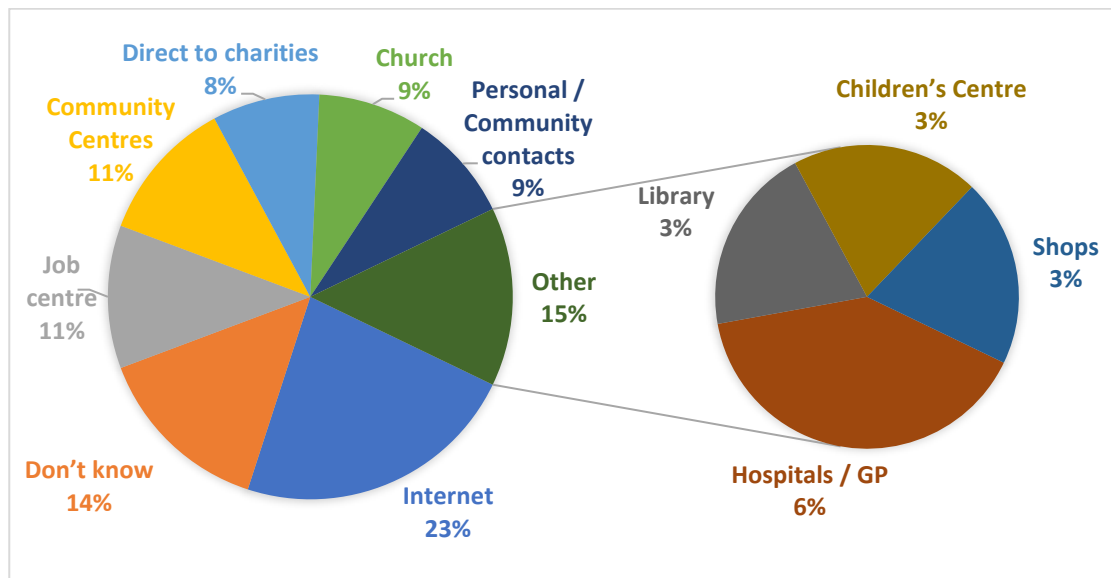


It was specifically Farsi speakers who saw volunteering as a way to improve their English

Few people understood volunteering was a way of increasing confidence and self-esteem

6. Where would you go for information about volunteering?

All common places to search for volunteering were identified



Level of knowledge about places to search for volunteering varied widely between individuals

There was no specialist knowledge mentioned e.g. the Volunteer Centre or specific websites

- *“There should be lists of voluntary organisations in public places.”* Spanish
- *“I had an appointment with a Psychologist who has suggested that I do some voluntary work so that I can learn some different skills and get a different job. I had previously been working as a painter but after my accident in 2017 my injuries make it difficult to go back to working as a painter, so I am looking for some voluntary work to learn skills which will enable me to get employment in a different area of work.”* Portuguese
- All the Farsi speakers replied don't know

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

1. What volunteering are you doing at the moment?

65% of respondents reported never having done any volunteering

- 65% said none

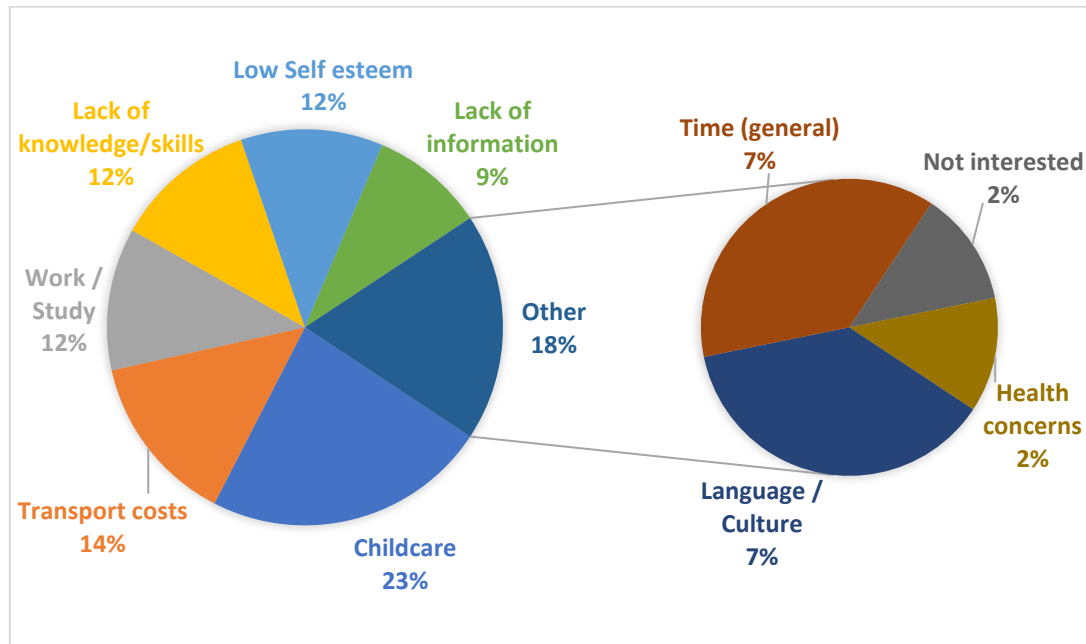
Language	Organisation	Role
<i>Sp</i>	<i>Solfed</i>	<i>I go to the meetings.</i>
<i>Sp</i>	<i>Bernardos</i>	<i>I tried to volunteer but had communication problems</i>
<i>Sp</i>	<i>MIND</i>	<i>I tried to volunteer but had communication problems</i>
<i>Sp</i>	<i>Informal</i>	<i>Charitable giving to the homeless / destitute</i>
<i>Mn</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Helping in child's class</i>
<i>Mn</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Helping in child's class</i>
<i>Mn</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Helping in child's class</i>
<i>Mn</i>	<i>Informal</i>	<i>Helping my neighbour with shopping</i>
<i>Pt</i>	<i>Informal</i>	<i>Helping anyone unemployed to be able to find a suitable job</i>
<i>Pt</i>	<i>Looking</i>	<i>To learn skills which will enable him to get employment in a different area of</i>
<i>Fa</i>	<i>Informal</i>	<i>Charitable giving to the homeless / destitute</i>
<i>Fa</i>	<i>Informal</i>	<i>I used to support an old lady</i>

- Only Polish was unrepresented by some form of volunteering in the past or present

"I don't hear much about volunteering in my environment, can't think about anyone I know who does this kind of job, thus haven't considered it yet" Polish

2. What would stop you from formal volunteering with an organisation or club?

73% said lack of time (due to childcare, work, studies and general) was the main barrier



Lack of understanding about how volunteering could help realise other priorities and needs

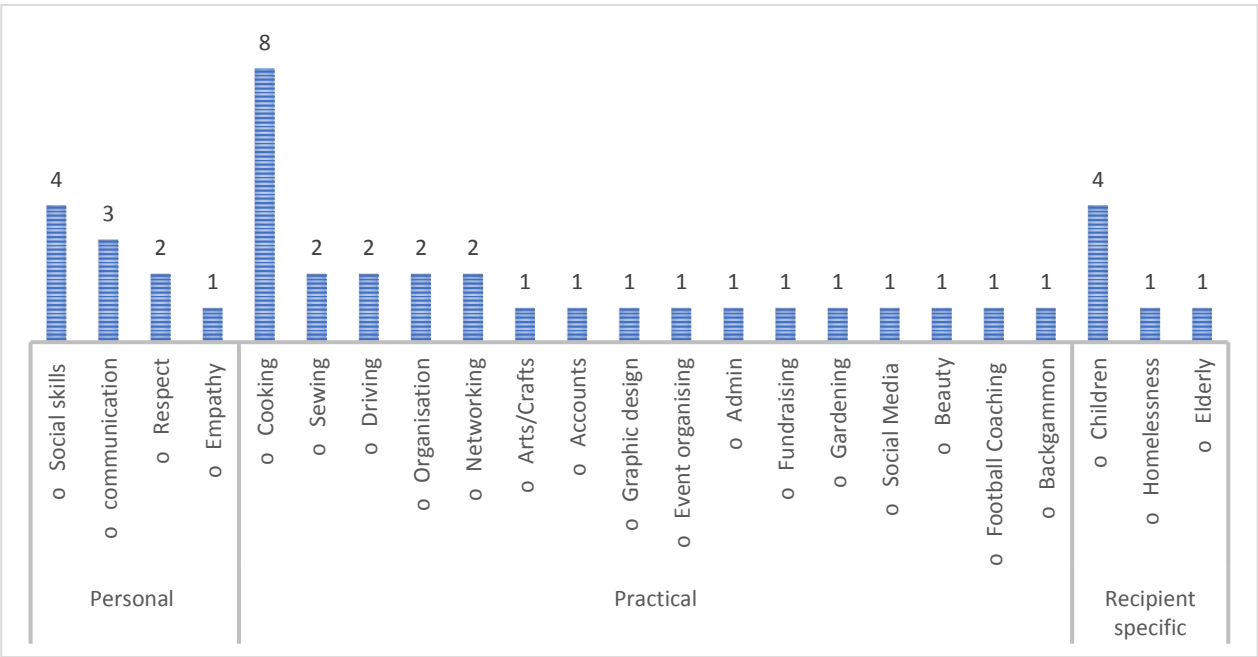
- *“especially having moved to the UK not long ago, my main priority is to work.”* Spanish
- *“It is more difficult for newly arrived people to the UK as they need time to settle first. It becomes easier when you are settled and get used to the system.”* Spanish

Poor experiences of volunteering and lack of support offered to migrant volunteers

- *“Many people at the organisation where I volunteer are experts, I feel I don’t have enough expertise.”* Spanish
- *“The organisation should be flexible, if there are tasks the volunteer cannot do, they should give them other tasks to do that require less responsibility or give them tasks that would not require speaking English for instance, if the person volunteering is a non-English speaker.”* Spanish

3. What skills or abilities do you have that you could share?

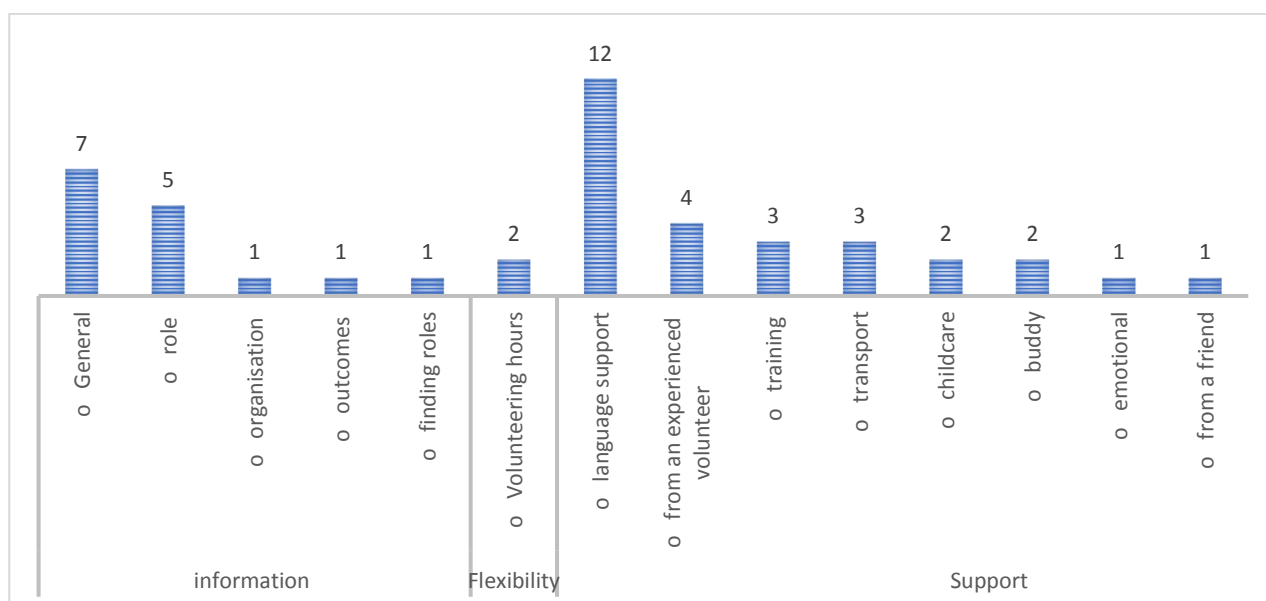
Participants identified a vast number of transferable skills and abilities they could share



Only one participant said “I don’t know”.

4. What help would you need to volunteer?

Support needs don't match up with barriers to volunteering



There is a concern about exploitation

"information about opportunities which are legitimate so you don't end up doing paid work for free" Polish

Micro-volunteering is a new and unexplored area

"if we had more spare time we would be very keen to be involved in volunteering" Portuguese