**Project Title:** Towards a Pedagogy of Volunteer Praxis

**Key words:** Praxis, pedagogy, volunteers, volunteering, welfare state

Praxis, the value of learning through practical experience, is well established within theories of pedagogy. Meanwhile, in times of financial retrenchment within broader society, attention has turned to the role of volunteers. Much concern has been centred around two opposing conceptions of the volunteer, on the one hand as people who are fulfilling vital roles that ought to be the remit of a welfare state, and who potentially therefore undermine the role of the state and weaken civic society, perhaps as an unintended consequence of volunteer work, or, on the other hand as people who embody a cohesive community spirit and whose activities need to be amplified. Less attention has been paid to the nature of the experience of volunteering, what people learn through their volunteering, how they learn and with what practical consequences both for themselves, their client group and the social relations between volunteers and clients.

Research to develop a critical model of a ‘pedagogy of volunteering’ has the potential to inform the role of volunteering within the university curriculum, supporting the University research strategy for new areas of research for REF 2020, supporting early career researchers, and attracting PhD students to work across disciplines (allied health, education).

**References:**

