



**Training workshop for CEV  
members  
on Employee Engagement  
September 25<sup>th</sup> 2004**



## **REPORT**

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## I. Background

ENGAGE is an international business-led campaign that aims to increase the quality and extent of employee engagement in the development of healthy, sustainable communities. It is led by the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF), in partnership with Business in the Community (BITC) and a coalition of international non-governmental organisations. The aims of the campaign are<sup>1</sup>:

- Raising awareness of the benefits of employee engagement in communities to business and society
- Inspiring companies and working with them in selected countries to increase the quality and extent of their employee engagement
- Helping business and civil society work together to maximise the effectiveness of employee engagement

The European Volunteer Center (CEV) joined the ENGAGE campaign in January 2003 as NGO Strategic Partner.

In May 2004, CEV conducted a questionnaire survey of its members on employee engagement. The aim was to find out more about how volunteer centres feel about employee engagement, what experiences have been made and what their respective needs are to further develop this tool. Generally, the survey showed that volunteer centres across all regions of Europe felt that businesses have an important role to play in the local community. However, many organisations stated that employee engagement cannot be the only way of a corporate commitment towards the community but that it needs to be complemented by other forms of involvement such as financial donations, sharing of office space (conference facilities) and resources (computers, faxes and photocopiers) as well as sponsoring. Only few of the CEV members had already experience in that field.<sup>2</sup> Most of the CEV members considered that they did not have the necessary skills and competences to further develop employee engagement within their own environment and that there was much more to learn, in particular through cooperation and sharing of experiences.

In order to remedy this gap CEV organized the “Training for Trainers” on September 25<sup>th</sup> 2004 in order to provide some input for interested members. This Seminar brought together 15 CEV members, representatives of national and/or regional volunteer centres, interested in developing community employee engagement programmes in order to discuss new approaches how to involve companies in a more effective way. In particular, an innovative concept of fundraising and partnership building developed by the Dutch member of CEV, CIVIQ, called the “*Marketplace*” has been described in detail. In order to be able to apply the concept the participants had the chance to exercise such a Marketplace in a role-play.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://www.iblf.org/csr/csrwebassist.nsf/content/f1d2b3aaj4.html#engagecampaign>

<sup>2</sup> See the CEV Summary of the Survey:

[http://www.cev.be/ocuments/EngageSurveyConclusions\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cev.be/ocuments/EngageSurveyConclusions_EN.pdf)

## II. List of Participants and Trainers

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Trainer (BITC)	GB	David Halley	David.halley@bitc.org.uk
Trainer (IBM)	GB	Celia Moore	Celia_moore@uk.ibm.com

### Trainers

This seminar was conducted by two professional trainers: David Halley, working for Business in the Community (BITC) and there responsible for the ENGAGE campaign, Leonie Oostendorp from CIVIQ, the Dutch national volunteer development agency and CEV member, encouraging and supporting volunteer work in the Netherlands. In order to complement the seminar Celia Moore from IBM UK presented IBM's 'On Demand Community Programme'.

### **III. Corporate community involvement**

#### **III.I. Employee Engagement**

##### What is Employee Engagement?

One of the issues that the participants have been introduced to is Employee Engagement in general. As many participants<sup>3</sup> had only a vague idea on what this actually is and on how volunteer centres can pro-actively foster this form of volunteering. Acting as part of a wider social investment in building company image in local communities, employee engagement is seen as a tangible way of demonstrating the company's social responsibility. Active employee community involvement is an innovative development within the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and means the mobilisation by businesses of the time, talent, energy and resources of their people to contribute to the community.<sup>4</sup> This includes:

- Long-term sustained commitments
- Skills-based, short-term problem solving assignments for community organisations
- Transfer of skills and core business competencies to community partners
- Team-based 'challenge' projects
- Company sponsored projects, including fundraising for community organisations

##### Who is benefiting of Employee Engagement?

###### **Employers and Employees:**

Many companies see in this tool an actual added value to the performance of their employees: Engaged employees can develop in a volunteer assignment a wide range of personal skills and behaviours through their commitment that are important for an effective working company:

- Communication skills
- Organisational, time management, prioritisation and stress management skills
- Social and personal skills – caring, negotiating and listening
- Report writing skills
- Planning skills
- Budgeting and financial management skills
- Understanding of co-workers and respect for diversity
- Innovative approaches to problem solving
- Risk awareness and risk taking
- Greater awareness of the value of teamwork
- Increase self-confidence

Furthermore, employee satisfaction is recognised as a key component of business success – companies with committed staff are more productive. Engaged work force makes more

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<sup>3</sup> As shown by the above-mentioned survey this is also true for most of the volunteer involving organisations throughout Europe having replied to the questionnaire.

<sup>4</sup> see: <http://www.iblf.org/csr/csrwebassist.nsf/content/f1d2b3aaj4.html#engagecampaign>

strenuous efforts to co-operate with those from other departments, and tend to lead to greater organisational effectiveness. As a result, research has shown that they become advocates for the company with external stakeholders and also stay employed longer. Commitment makes the employees feel good about themselves, the employer and may increase their loyalty to their company. Employees are proud of their company's community involvement and the opportunities that they have to be part of it.

Furthermore there is increasing evidence that people do make the link between companies that are actively involved in the community and those that are good to work for. Potential recruits are choosing employers who behave responsibly, give employees the opportunity to make a difference on issues that they care about and give support to volunteering efforts.

Employee Engagement can help foster inter-departmental cohesion within an organisation by creating a shared sense of purpose and loyalty, and provide staff with new insights and knowledge that encourage innovation both in the community and within the company.

Finally, in the context of media and globalisation companies are increasingly under pressure. Employee Engagement is a key factor for companies in order to strengthening reputation in the local and wider community. A direct involvement in local communities will strengthen the links between citizens (seen by companies obviously as possible clients) and the company. Responsible consumers do care more and more about the company's policies and ethical behaviour – contributing through employee engagement to local projects may significantly increase the company's reputation. This can result in (for companies important) direct increase of clients / consumers. At a larger scale, bigger campaigns from companies that want to show their social responsibility can be taken up but nationwide volunteer centres that can commit companies to their social responsibility: At a time where markets get more and more competitive and media more and more important, the "image" of a company is a crucial tool to convince consumers and get clients.

In an overview, the following reasons may push companies to engage with their community:

Business Function	Objectives supported
<b>Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• building brand familiarity and favourability</li> <li>• sales promotions</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• boosting staff morale</li> <li>• developing team building skills</li> <li>• management development</li> </ul>
<b>Public Affairs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating platforms for dialogue national with local level opinion formers</li> </ul>
<b>Public Relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• generating positive media coverage</li> </ul>

- **Volunteer centres obviously think in different categories and have a different approach to volunteering than companies – a much less “countable” one. Sometimes there are as well reservations towards partnering with the corporate sector. But companies can be convinced that employee engagement actually is added value to the performance of the company. It is, thus, crucial that volunteer centres learn the “language” of companies and they may use the above-stated reasons to approach the corporate sector because volunteering does make a difference to them.**

### **Communities:**

Companies can play an important role in helping to solve community problems. By engaging in dialogue with community stakeholders the company can jointly identify needs and solutions. This strengthening of relations with stakeholders often leads to partnerships that leverage company resources to create a more sustainable impact in the community. So communities can benefit from Employee Engagement by:

- Providing the community organisations with new and fresh perspective
- Creating an increased awareness for the business community of voluntary problems
- Transferring of core competencies of business through the time, skills and resources of employees into local communities. So many social investment initiatives can be leveraged to create a sustainable impact through the skills, time and energy of employees:
  - Produce of business plans
  - Create long-term funding strategies, means so that they can acquire their own funds
  - Advise on contractual agreements
  - Assist with Information Technology
  - Assist with marketing and PR
- **Community organisations have a different way of functioning than companies, too. As stated above, they can just like volunteer organisations profit from employee involvement convincing companies of the added value of such an engagement. It is, thus, crucial that they use the “language” of companies. The above-stated reasons may help them to approach the corporate sector convincing them that volunteering does make a difference to them.**

### **Voluntary organisations**

Volunteer organisations can benefit it many ways from employee engagement:

- Employees can be an attractive new target group as “volunteers”.
- Employee engagement can reduce costs and build capacity of staff within the volunteer organisation.
- Depending on the skills of the engaged employees, volunteer organisations can profit from expertise in areas such as
  - Communication and press work
  - Financial management and budgeting

- Marketing and promotion
  - Team building
  - Technical knowledge
- **Many volunteer organisations are reticent when it comes to engage with corporates. There are good reasons for this and ethical issues do play a role in this. But at the same time, volunteer organisations can profit from companies and the skills of employees that want to volunteer. If volunteer centre do see a win-win situation in a possible partnership with corporates they can be assured that companies can be convinced that employee engagement actually is added value to the performance of the company. As stated above it is, in this case, crucial that volunteer centres learn the “language” of companies and they may use the above-stated reasons to approach the corporate sector because volunteering does make a difference to them.**

### **III.II. Other forms of corporate community involvement**

Employee engagement is one form of partnership between volunteer organisations and the corporate sector and has been the major focus of the seminar. To complete the picture, other forms of partnerships have been outlined.

Some of the **reasons why companies get involved** have been stated above in the framework of employee engagement. Other reasons for corporates being interested in partnering with volunteer organisations include:

- Affinity of the volunteer involving organisation’s aim with the core business of the company
- Development of staff (see above)
- Access to markets
- Employee morale and motivation
- Influence with government
- Investment in an educated workforce
- Investment in social inclusion
- Reputation of the company

In addition to employee engagement, **companies can get involved in the following ways:**

- Gifts in kind and recycled resources
- Use of premises
- Sponsorship
- Access to products and markets
- Cause related marketing
- Access to Training
- Professional advice
- Support to fundraising

- Free publicity or space

**Volunteer organisations can, thus, profit in many ways from corporate engagement. A few ways are:**

- Reducing costs
  - Building capacity of staff
  - Acquiring office or other equipment
  - Improving services to clients
  - Publicity for their mission
  - Common research projects
  - Access to professional skills
  - Additional free resource
- 
- **In order to build a relationship with a company, it is crucial to clearly define the project on which the partnership should focus and to identify the needs on both sides. It is indispensable to know about the partner's needs and interest in order to forge a meaningful working relationship. Possible affinities can help building a partnership and both sides (most of all volunteer organisations that are not always used to this) have to be able to formulate what is special about them and why the other should get involved / should partner.**
  - **Whereas clarity of objectives and awaited benefits, a strategy regarding the partnership, mutual respect and kept commitments encourage a successful collaboration, vague objectives, one dominant partner, a culture clash, poor communication, missed commitments, loss of interest; lack of openness and lack of professionalism are certainly sources of failure.**
  - **A broker can be useful in establishing partnerships. He / she has to understand the business case, the community need and the volunteer organisation's expectations and offers in order to broker the collaboration.**

## **IV. The concrete examples**

### **IV.I. IBM's On Demand Community – an Example of Employee Engagement 9**

IBM as an multinational company has developed an own large scale programme on employee involvement with staff working only on this issue. Celia Moore, one of the trainers, is responsible for IBM's community engagement activities.

For IBM volunteering in the community means:

- Creating emotional benefits of doing something inherently good; giving back to the community and helping those in need
- Reinforcing the belief that IBM and IBM employees can and should make a difference in the world
- Bringing IBM employees together for a collective good; reinforces the idea of "Team IBM" outside of the office
- Giving IBM employees an opportunity to enrich skills and demonstrate the value of IBM technology by applying both to community agencies in need
- Building on IBM's rich heritage of providing not only technical leadership, but also community leadership

#### **IBM On Demand Community**

##### What is it?

Called IBM On Demand Community, launched in late 2003, the new program transforms all models of corporate volunteerism by providing employees worldwide with more than 140 IBM technology assets and other innovative resources, strategies, programs and tutorials they can access online and share with the agencies where they volunteer. In addition, IBM will increase the value of technology grants and cash awards to eligible organizations where employees use the new on demand tools.<sup>5</sup>

The new initiative builds on established IBM Corporate Community Relations programs and includes a rich portfolio of proven technology solutions for schools and not-for-profit organisations, online training and support materials for IBM volunteers that enrich their community work.

IBM will hold launch events for the new initiative at 90 company sites this month in North America, Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia Pacific. By mid-2004, all of the technology solutions and assets associated with IBM On Demand Community will be available in 10 languages. IBM expects more than 25,000 employees to participate as on demand volunteers in the next two years.

With the IBM On Demand Community initiative, every IBM employee can:

- Learn about IBM's rich heritage of giving something back to the community
- Identify opportunities to get involved

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ibm.com/ibm/ibmgives/grant/giving/demand.shtml>

- Receive effective volunteer training
- Access real, proven technology solutions that can be shared for free with not-for-profit agencies and schools

### How does it work?

Employees of IBM (also retired staff) worldwide now have access to an Intranet site that serves as a home base for IBM On Demand Community. The employees can register at the site and they have immediate access to a full range of technology solutions that continue IBM's commitment to advancing achievement in schools, closing the digital divide, and improving business strategies and outcomes for not-for-profits through technology. Resources on the site will also enable employees to assess their skills, and take online training to improve their volunteer ability. Employees can even tailor their volunteer choice depending on how much time they have to give, with solutions geared for those who wish to volunteer once a week or once a year.

Example:

An employee in New York who wants to volunteer in her child's classroom will find technology solutions on the web site that include:

- dynamic classroom activities,
- science presentations,
- mentoring a student,
- leading change in schools,
- helping teachers with technology and more.

The same process holds true for employees who volunteer at a not-for-profit organization, with solutions that include valuable technology planning and assessments, and award-winning software for senior organizations to help people with vision and other disabilities better navigate the web. If the employee uses the solutions and becomes a regular school volunteer, IBM will provide increased levels of technology or cash awards to the school.

### **Community grants**

IBM Community Grants is a new program that increases grant award limits for employees and retirees who regularly volunteer with not-for-profit organizations and utilize IBM On Demand Community solutions. If IBM volunteers are working with an eligible community service organization for an average of eight hours per month for five consecutive months they could receive either a cash or equipment grant. Among the range of organizations that IBM Community Grants has assisted are for example:

- Preschools/Childcare Centres
- Adult and Youth Literacy Programs
- Community and family service agencies
- Job training programs

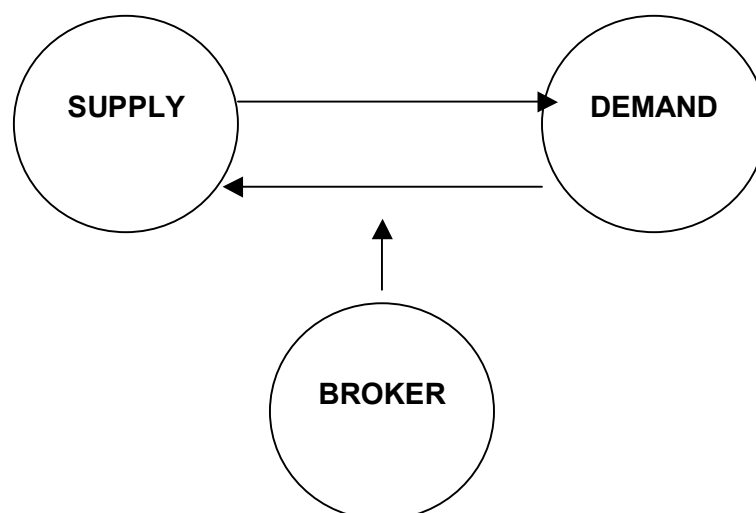
- Organizations that aid the elderly and disabled
- Museums, libraries and other cultural organizations

#### **IV.II. How to build partnership between Corporates, Local Communities and the Voluntary Sector - The Concept of the “Marketplace”**

Often volunteer organisations see extra funding as the only solution to their problems. The Marketplace is a possibility for not-for-profit organizations (NPOs) to meet and build up new partnership with potential suppliers from the corporate sector that at the end represents a win-win situation on both sides and that represents an example of both “employee engagement” and “other forms of corporate community involvement” developed above. It brings together businesses, academia or governments at local, regional or national level with the voluntary sector in order to foster partnerships. Partnership itself is the crucial added value to this concept of a Marketplace – not the “value” of the goods and services that might be exchanged between the partners all along the partnership.

The concept of the Marketplace has been developed in the Netherlands by the national Dutch Volunteer Centre (that has become now CIVQ). A first pilot project was launched with huge effort in Amsterdam 1996 / 1997 to organise a one day Marketplace with 35 companies, foundations and other suppliers present. 150 persons from the volunteer sector presented demands and, with the help of the brokers, matches of around 45.000 EUR (1.000.000 Dutch Guilders) could be achieved. The marketplace proved to be a success story and many local Marketplaces have been organised throughout the Netherlands since that time.

The Marketplace functions like a stock market, where matchmaking between the supply and demand for social projects takes place. NPOs present demands on concrete projects they want to develop, companies, charitable trusts and service clubs, will offer supply in different forms (means, financial help, employee engagement, etc.) A so-called broker, who is to mediate between the two sides, facilitates the contact between the two sides.



## Supply

On the supply side we can find not only business (which were of particular interest for the seminar) but also funding organisations and foundations, media, government or even NPOs themselves.

As described in the chapter before, business can provide a variety of support such as expertise in management, help for professional campaigning or space for local volunteer centre events, and at the same time they can profit when their staff is involved in voluntary action or their name is associated with the promotion of voluntary work. Basically, the supply can be summed up to:

- Time
- Knowledge
- Information
- Ideas / Networks
- Means
- Financial resources

Companies can get interested in partnering with volunteer organisations for a variety of reasons that we have introduced above. The participation at a Marketplace can be advertised to companies as a possibility to

- build partnerships with interesting partners
- to develop their policy of corporate responsibility
- to create your community investment programme
- and to get into contact with interesting volunteer projects which can be “FUN & INSPIRATION”

Concrete Example for a supply at a Dutch marketplace that has been successful finding a partner:

A regional Chamber of Commerce wants to develop activities in order to promote employee engagement among Small and Middle sized Enterprises (SME). They have designed a leaflet and organised a meeting. The notice that SMEs are interested but do not now how to become involved themselves. The Chamber of Commerce wants to organise a employee engagement project, where they can involve several SMEs at the same time.

## Demand

Volunteer organisations or generally NPOs can present demands that cover the same areas:

- Support with knowledge, information
- Time

- Manpower / Means
- Financial Resources

The Marketplace is NOT suitable for structural projects or long-term core funding but based on short-term concrete needs and projects.

In order to present successful and meaningful demands, NPOs have to be “educated” not think only about money (but other forms of support) and to be clear that they demand but that they have much to offer in exchange (see above the reasons why partnering with volunteer organisations is added value to companies). NPOs have to be clear about what they want (and flexible in order to adapt with what the company has to offer) and about what they have to offer as well. Only then “real” partnerships can emerge.

A demand needs

- A concrete definition of the project, the needs and the desired outcome
- but flexibility to adapt to the supply of the company as well
- Describing the actual need and the desired outcome
- Description of the time, the skills and the means that are required
- ...and a shift in NPOs reasoning: Do not ask for money! Look for partners!

Concrete Example for a demand at a Dutch marketplace that has been successful finding a partner:

A volunteer organisation *Dress for Success* is helping unemployed women with a set of nice clothes, to look good during interviews. In this way the women will have more success in finding a job. The project is prospering: the volunteers want to bring the concept to other cities. They also want to move to a real store in the centre of the city, but they cannot afford the hire and other cost of this.

### **The broker - key characteristics of a good broker**

If a particular demand is not fully covered by any of the themes and if another party in the Marketplace might be interested, a mediator will be available to find a potential partner for you. These mediators are networkers who know more about your potential partners and whether they are there. They can also help you in matching 'demand' to 'supply'.

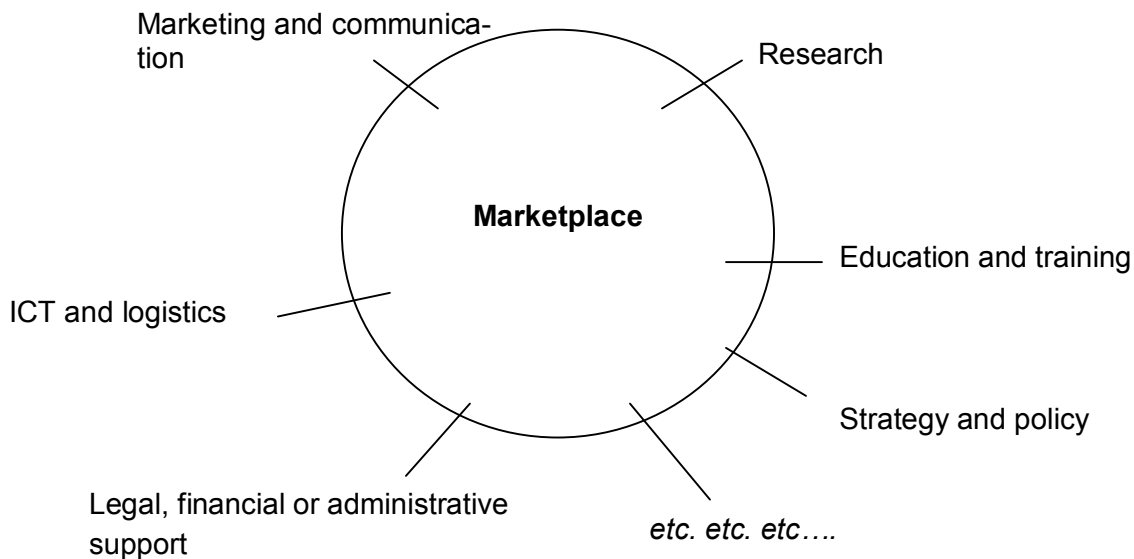
Quoting Leonie Oostendorp, a good broker is like a “sheep with five legs”, in the following important criteria that a broker should full fill are mentioned:

- Having contacts and networks to local business
- Having inside into the reality of a community: knowledge about the community organisations, the voluntary sector as well as connections to local governments
- Being reliable and efficient, as well as realistic
- Being professional, experienced, dynamic, flexible and creative (matching supply and demand that at first sight might not be compatible).

- Having good communication skills, strategic working skills
- As a kind of mediator s/he should empower the partners but not impose partnerships

## The Marketplace

The Marketplace itself is a dynamic event where actually the different partners discuss their possible partnerships / matches. Due to the wide range of topics across diverse areas the supply and demand covers, there are different thematic areas (visibly presented in different parts of the room / venue) where supply and demand can meet and trade. As an example, the Dutch pilot marketplaces had foreseen the following thematical areas:



- **The organisation of a marketplace is a huge effort. It is therefore crucial for volunteer organisations and NPOs to make a joint effort with business (e.g. chamber of commerce), service organisations (like lions club or rotary club) and local communities to organise such an event. A team of committed is indispensable to make a Marketplace a success.**
- **Before the actual Marketplace taking place it can be useful to already collect expressions of interest regarding demand and supply. It is then easier for all parts to know who will come and present what and it is a good means of training the brokers beforehand – they will have an overview on the persons to bring together.**
- **It is then important to make the Marketplace a dynamic event (no seats available), to invite well known persons for publicity, to have effective (and visible) brokers that do not allow negotiations going on for more than 10 minutes, to have contracts (“matches”) signed in public and to announce the results and to invite press.**

## **V. Some evaluation statements of the participants**

In the feedbacks that the participants provided regarding the content and the quality of the seminar, the following conclusions were drawn:

### **Personal conclusions**

- *I'm very anxious to examine possibilities on Employee Involvement in our region too, that we will have to examine opportunities very well in order to establish connections between the volunteer sector and enterprises.*
- *The seminar was well constructed and it gave me an opportunity to meet with three interesting trainers and to learn from their experience and discuss corporate-social engagement with the specification of their particular organization.*
- *In our country communication between the companies and no profit organizations becomes more and more important - So you can easily understand how much are interested in improving our contact with them.*
- *Interesting seminar and a great group of people participating. It is always good to network and be inspired from what others do in this area that is currently a "hot" topic in our country.*
- *One of our conclusions was that it is vital for practitioners in this field to communicate more and exchange ideas. Both the Cecile network and the ENGAGE campaign respond to this need. Communication is important for all parties involved, not only for the unexperienced (who learn and make contacts) but also for the more experienced who can benefit from the fresh perspective of the newcomers*
- *The seminar was very helpful, built up very well, with a good combination of theory and exercise. The example of IBM was interesting. And especially the way Leonie ensured to let us taste a bit of matching between organisations and enterprises was very much appreciated.*

### **How will the seminar impact on your work?**

- *We now have a better understanding of employee engagement and we got an idea on how the concept has been developed in other CEV-countries. We will search for ways to look for projects or initiatives to launch the idea in our region.*
- *At this time I am considering the applications of the ideas given at the workshop for example the marketplace with my colleagues and examining their possible applications in our country. It was particularly of interest for us the IBM activities with the community and we are checking the possibility of local cooperation.*
- *I am currently writing a guide for organisations and companies in our country how to initiate, develop and successfully execute an employee volunteering programme. Many good points and sources for information were mentioned in the presentations.*
- *We are considering the implementation of the marketplace model – in a web-based version.*
- *We are also considering getting involved into the different forms of corporate partnership. We felt that the information we were given and the interaction that took place on the topic helped us to build the confidence that we need as beginners.*

## Still open questions after the seminar...

- *We have questions on a more concrete level: How to approach not as a volunteer organisation (because this aspect we have seen and learned about during the seminar) but as a centre on the national level companies and enterprises. Tools for brokerage,...*
- *Question for us remains: will we be able to find a good connection towards enterprises, to the CECILE-network. As the seminar was organised by CEV I wonder if the Employee Involvement idea can be put somehow into a project on CEV-level.*
- *How can we create in our country an atmosphere where corporation will be committed to contribute to social activities as it is for instance in the UK. This question applies both to the company managers and to the public demand.*
- *I would have liked more theory (Some presentations skipped quite a bit due to time pressure) and more examples of successful programmes and different ways companies and volunteers can contribute (i.e. more companies than IBM and more methods than Marketplace).*
- *It would have been helpful to have a presentation on links to directives and initiatives re Corporate Social Responsibility e.g. UN Millennium Development Goals.*

## And as an overall assessment the participants felt that the seminar was...

*Friendly, open, informative, lively, intelligent, unfortunately somewhat timepressed, fun, flexible, exhaustive, interactive and opportunistic.*

## VI. Further Information and useful links

- International Business Leader Forum (ENGAGE partner): <http://www.iblf.org/>
- Business in the Community (ENGAGE partner): <http://www.bitc.org.uk/index.html>
- IBM Community on Demand project: <http://www.ibm.com/ibm/ibmgives/grant/giving/demand.shtml>
- CIVIQ (Dutch Volunteer Organisation, inventor of Marketplace model): [www.viviq.nl](http://www.viviq.nl)
- CEV (European Volunteer Centre, ENGAGE partner): [www.cev.be](http://www.cev.be)
- Key documents about the CSR debate at European level (Multi-Stakeholder Forum) provided at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/csr/documents.htm> criticism from the Social platform can be found at: <http://www.socialplatform.org/code/en/camp.asp?Page=308>

## VII. Acknowledgments

***We would like to thank the trainers of the seminar, David Halley (BiTC), Leonie Oostendorp (CIVIQ) and Celia Moore (IBM) for their contributions and their commitment to make this event such a success. CEV members really appreciated the presentations about partnership with corporates and are very keen on building on the insights they could get and are looking forward to implementing the concept of the marketplace at national level.***