



# ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION OF VOLUNTEERS IN AN AUSTRALIAN EMERGENCY SERVICE AGENCY

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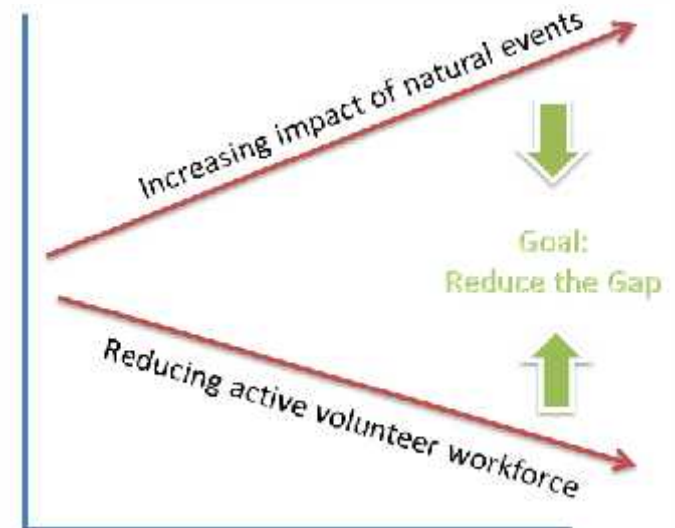
## THE PROBLEM

1) ES organisations are facing increased difficulties attracting and recruiting new volunteers, especially younger generations

and more importantly,

2) organisations are experiencing difficulties *retaining* them

This depletes the organisation's financial, social, skill, and knowledge resources



## THE PROBLEM

Turnover occurs at various stages of the volunteering life cycle (recruitment, training, socialisation, performance, and retirement)

But turnover during the socialisation stage is something that can be managed and will have positive outcomes.

It is also poorly studied.

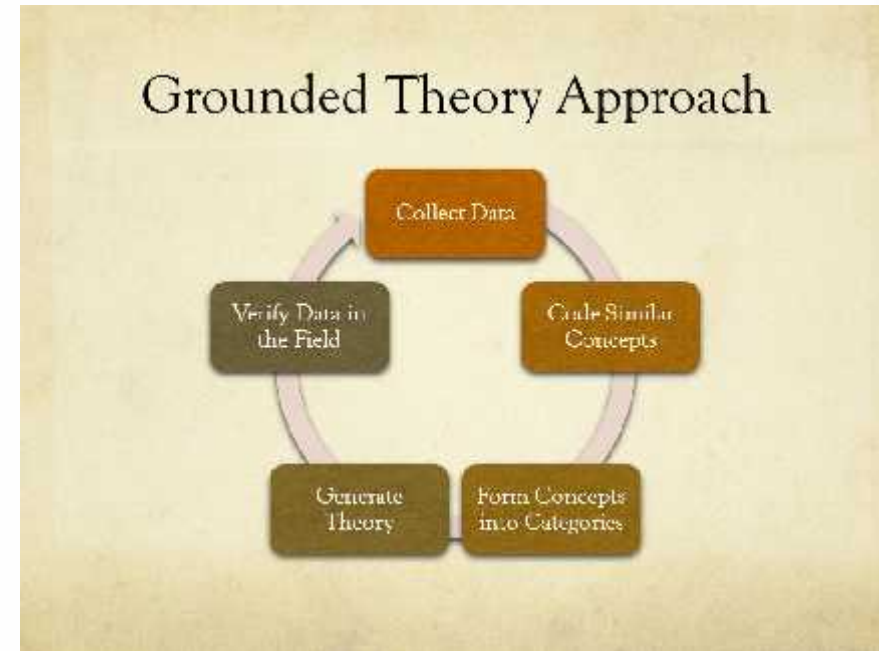
It is also the stage which holds the greatest benefit for the organisation (investment has begun, but there has been little time for ROI)



## THE RESEARCH

As little research had been done in this area, this study adopted a **Grounded Theory** approach

**AIM:** To examine the processes that newly trained volunteers go through during their socialisation once they are deployed to their respective units, and the underlying mechanisms which lead to their retention or turnover



## THE ORGANISATION

Focus Groups & Interviews across 7 SES units involving 157 participants.

12 focus groups with 8-10 participants

63 In-depth face-to-face interviews – 40 mins



## WHAT IS SOCIALISATION

the 'process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role'  
(J. van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211).

**It is important because** this is where new members develop required:

- attitudes,
- values,
- Knowledge,
- behavioural expectations, and
- norms



# WHAT IS SOCIALISATION

## It is important because:

- it sustains the organisation's values, culture and norms,
- it helps newcomers make sense of their role, and
- it increases their commitment to the organisation

## It improves:

- newcomers' task mastery,
- role orientation,
- affiliation to the work group, and
- understanding of organisational issues and practices



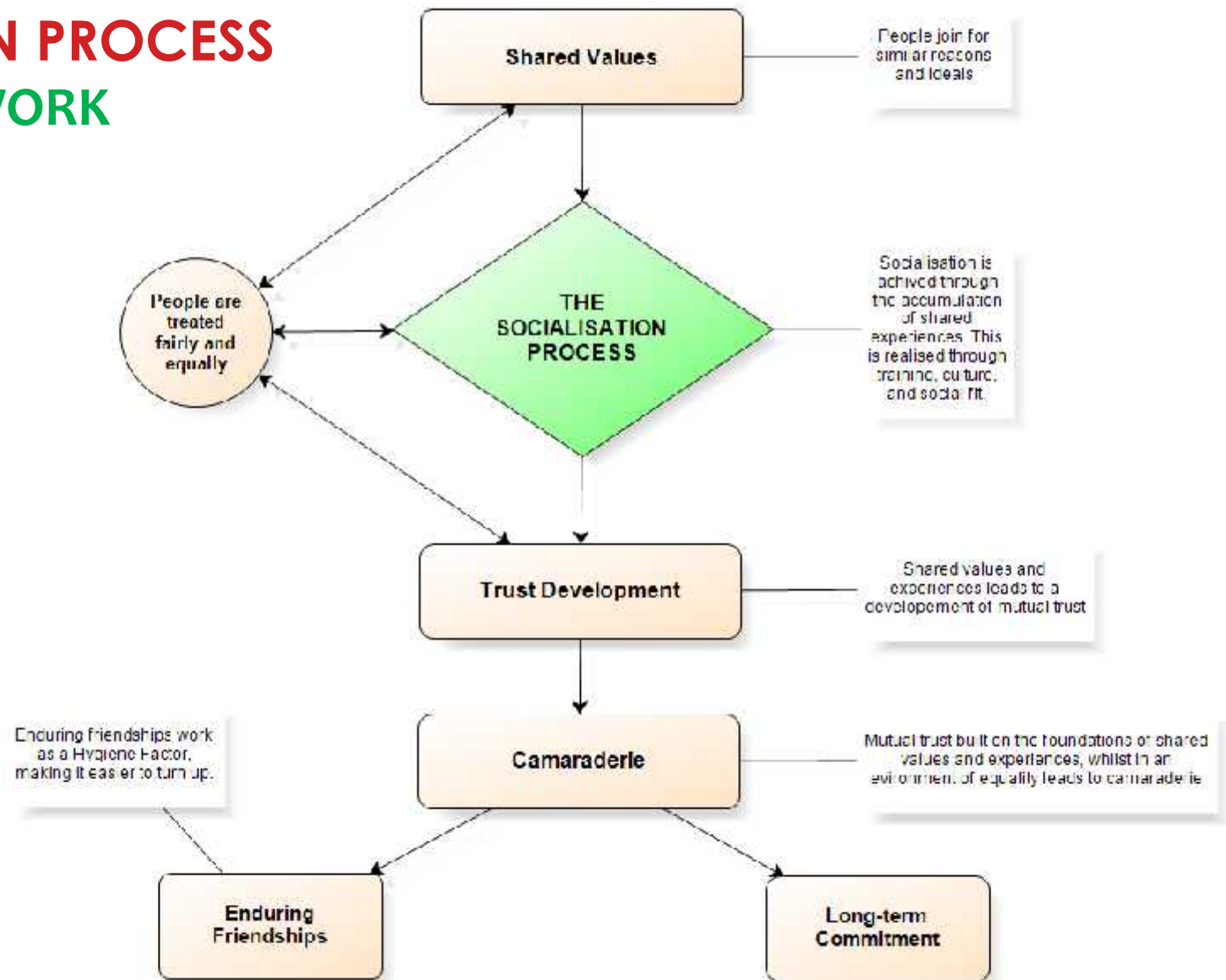
# THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS



The process of joining an organisation, followed by participating in it and eventually leaving it, is known as organisational socialisation



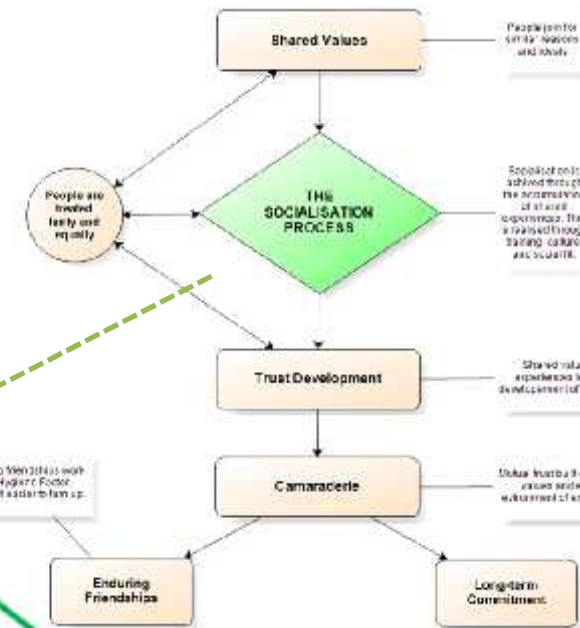
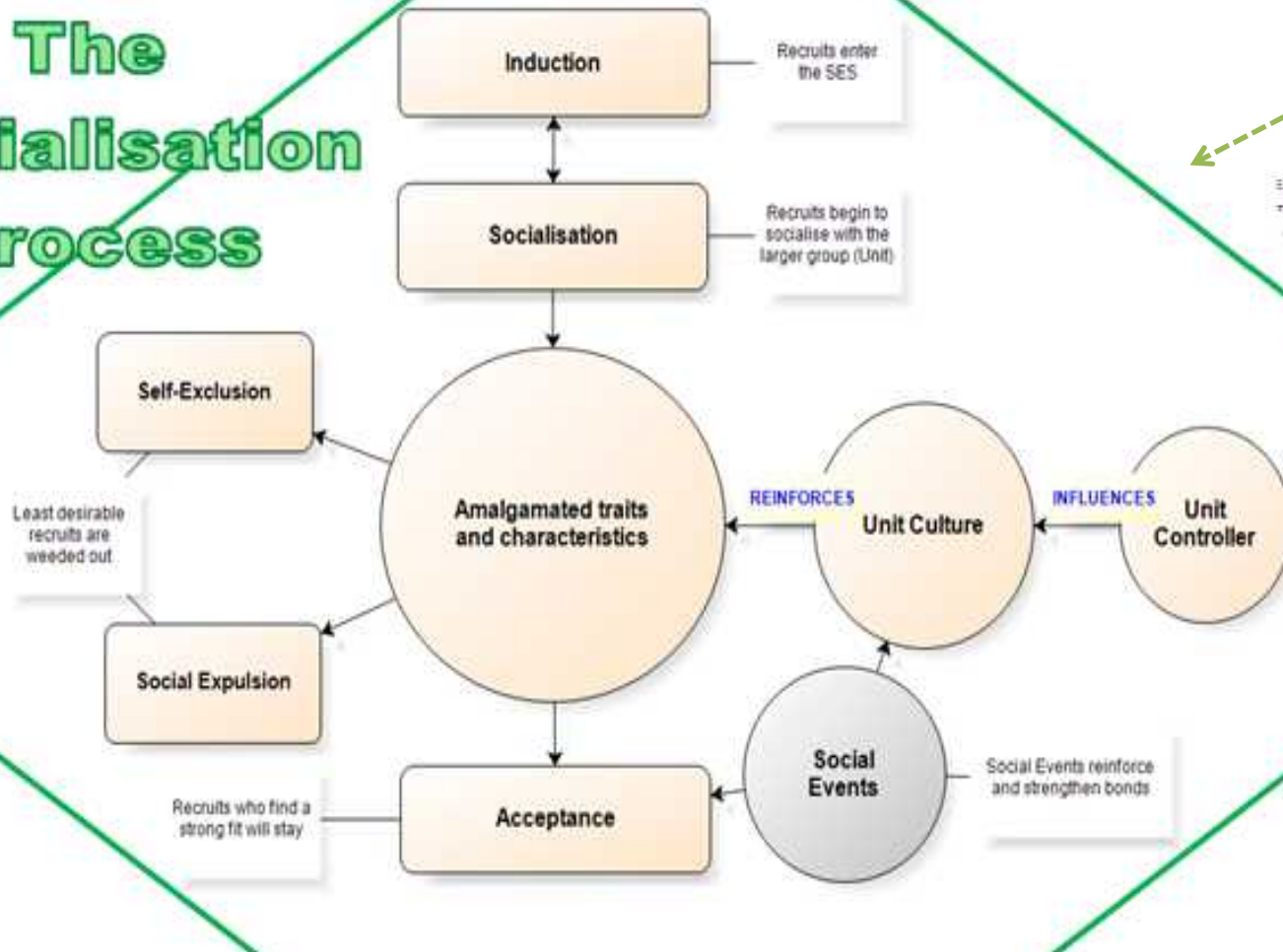
# THE SOCIALISATION PROCESS – HOW IT SHOULD WORK



# THE SOCIALISATION PROCESS

## – WHERE THE PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS BEGIN

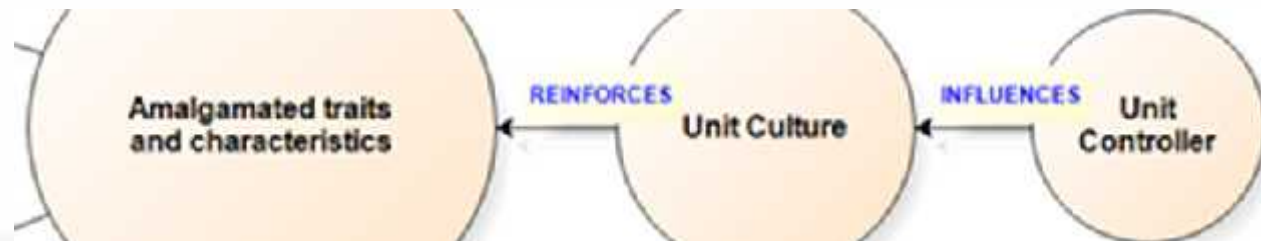
### The Socialisation Process



# CONCLUSION

## Managing turnover during the socialisation stage

1. Be sure to adopt an early socialisation policy for new recruits so that they can under go their *'trial by personality'* early
  1. They can be expelled or self-excluded early, before creating harm and consuming resources.
2. Ensure the culture of the unit or brigade is the *right* culture to attract and retain the *right* people
  1. If it isn't right, then the best way to change it is to change executive leadership because:



## CONCLUSION

Given that many Controllers and Captains may not want to leave to make way for an improved culture...

There are three strategies to help incumbent leaders shape the right culture:

- 1. Human Resource Management Practices.**
- 2. Leadership.**
- 3. Socialisation Approaches.**

# HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- **Selection, promotion and removal processes**



- New volunteers can be **selected** through a deliberate strategy focusing on job and cultural fit.
- Which is reinforced through **promotion**.
- Volunteers who do not fit can be discouraged from further participation – *although not always easy*.



# LEADERSHIP

- **Lead by example.**
  - Through **role modelling** and **coaching**
- **Sponsorship and facilitation of training**
  - Leaders can influence how others should act and behave through the allocation of training and other desired resources



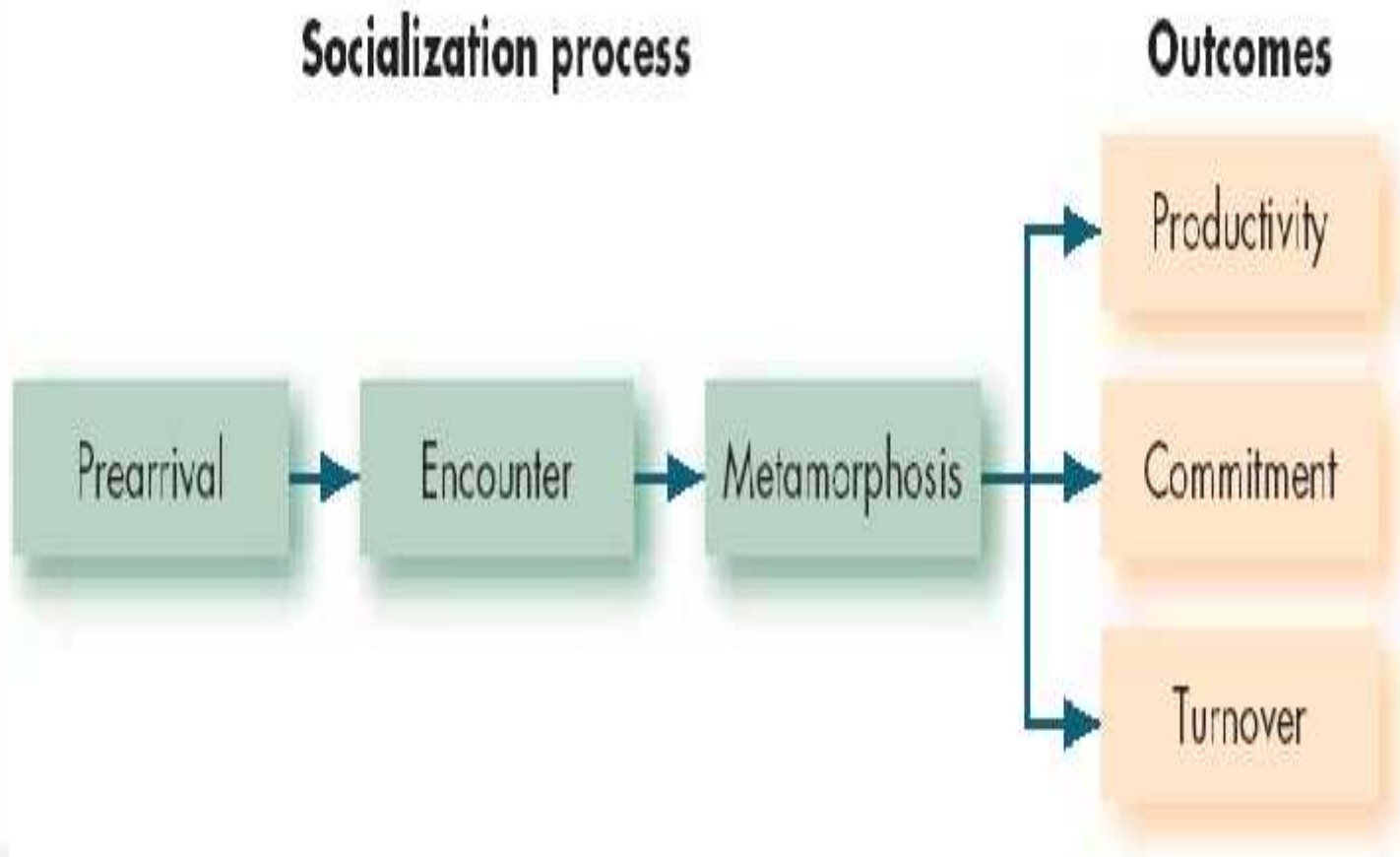
# SOCIALISATION

- **Rites and ceremonies.**
  - Create a code of conduct for illustrating desired behavioural protocols.
- **Stories and myths.**
  - Are a means of manipulating the culture to something the company finds more desirable.
  - For example, Tom Hanks' portrayal of a loyal Federal Express worker in 'Castaway' is a way of reinforcing a culture through fictional accounts.

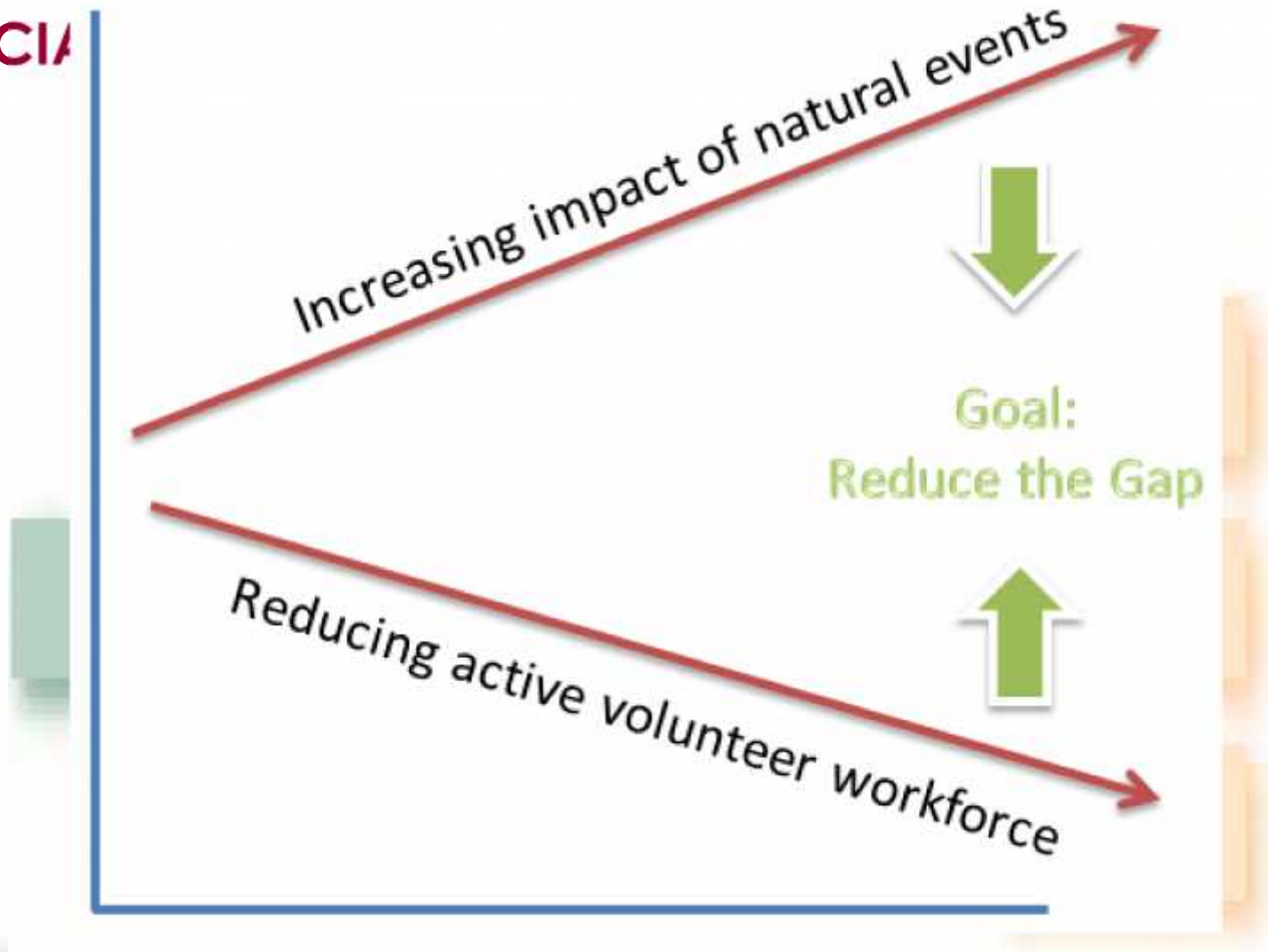




# THE SOCIALISATION MODEL



# THE SOCIAL



**QUESTIONS ???**

**THANKS  
FOR  
LISTENING**