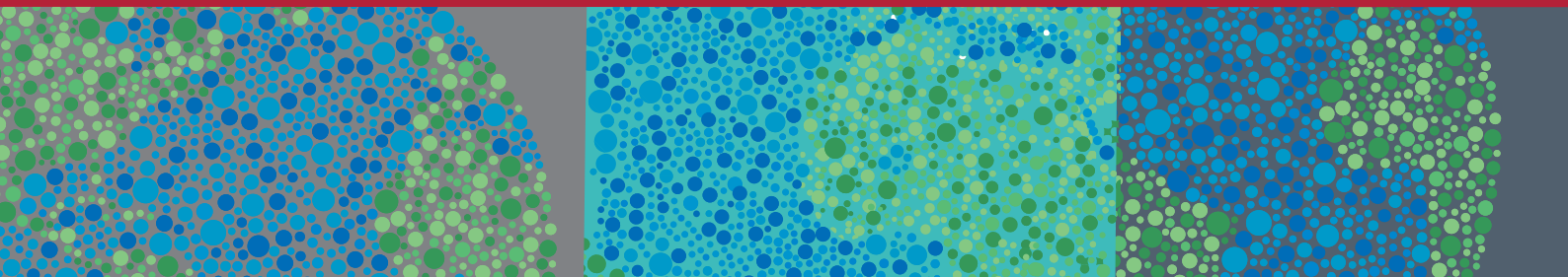
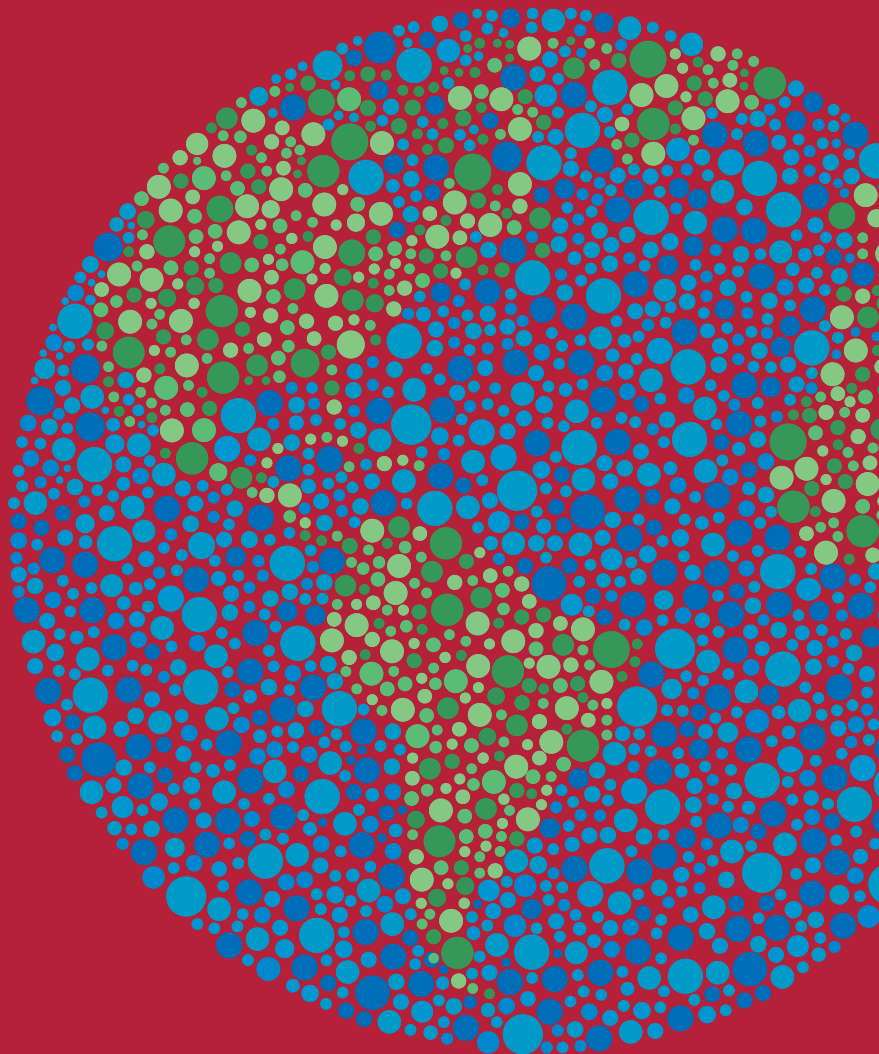




MODELS OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING

TRENDS, INNOVATION & GOOD PRACTICE.

Report Prepared for Comhlámh by:



Honorary Patron, Mary Robinson.

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Acknowledgements & Disclaimer

Acknowledgements

This study was conducted by the VOSESA research team and their contributions are acknowledged with thanks: Lauren Graham, Helene Perold, Karena Cronin, Mariatu Fonnah, Dr Tinashe Pfigu and Benter Okello. We are particularly grateful for the contributions made by the representatives from the organisations profiled in this report. They took time to share their in-depth knowledge and programme and enlarged our understanding of the varied nature of international volunteering: Bert Vercamer (AFS Interculture), Sara Adelman, Kidest Hailu, and Michael Gogwane (AIHA), Diane Der (CWY), Anton Kieffer (EIL), Shannon Maynard and Eve Mungai (Grameen Foundation – Bankers without Borders) and Judith Turbyne (Progressio). Our thanks also go to Fleachta Phelan, Dervla King and Siobhan Sleeman at Comhlámh, who enhanced through the quality of the study through their helpful feedback on various drafts of the report. The interest generated in the course of this study has enabled VOSESA to widen the knowledge base about international voluntary service in important respects.

Disclaimer

This report is the sole responsibility of VOSESA. By virtue of preparing the report or otherwise in connection with this study, VOSESA will not assume any responsibility or have any liability to any third parties.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

A&O	Allen and Overy
AFS	American Field Service Intercultural Programs
AIHA	American International Health Alliance
AVI	Australian Volunteers International
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CWY	Canada World Youth
DMIS	Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
DP	Development Perspectives
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EIL	Experiments in International Living
FK Norway	Fredskorpset
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICL	Inter-Cultural Learning
ICP	Innovations in Civic Participation
IDEA	Irish Development Education Association
IVCO	International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAGE Net	South African German Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPW	Students Partnership Worldwide
UNDP	United Nations Development Agency
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VOESA	Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

UCDVO volunteer Daphne Amouna with one of the children who took part in the summer camps in Gros Morne, Haiti.



Executive Summary



Sara McMurray with pupils in Himachal Pradesh, India, on her last day volunteering at the school

This research report has been prepared for Comhlámh by Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa (VOSESA). Comhlámh, the Irish Association of Volunteers and Development workers, seeks to foster good practice and critical engagement in volunteering and action for development. The organisation's vision is of development workers and international volunteers working in solidarity for a just, equitable and sustainable world. To support its objective of promoting good practice in volunteering for development, Comhlámh commissioned VOSESA to undertake a study that would give an overview of the range of models of international volunteering in action globally, documenting examples of good practice and innovation. Specific objectives included:

- Identify different models of international volunteering;
- Look at how these models contribute to development;
- Highlight examples of good practice and innovation within international volunteering; and
- Determine emerging trends and growth areas.

To inform the report's analysis, VOSESA reviewed and considered the work of 90 international volunteer sending agencies (VSAs) selected on the basis of regional representation and to ensure a variety of international volunteering models and programmes were surveyed. We then conducted a closer review of 42 organisations; of these, 17 were selected for in-depth analysis. These organisations' volunteering programmes were assessed, analysed and reviewed in terms of their alignment with our understanding of progressive development practice, which includes values such as extending participation, promoting equity and social justice, and creating equitable partnerships.

The resulting research shows that there is growing diversity in the way in which international volunteering is practised. While the traditional model of sending mainly professionals and young people as volunteers from developed countries to serve in developing countries is still dominant, there is increasing innovation in international volunteering programme design. These changes in the structure of international volunteering have largely been stimulated by closer alignment with development objectives and how these reinforce or challenge traditional relationships between North and South.

There is growing recognition of the need to think critically about the practice and impact of international volunteering, and to align it with wider development thinking. This can find expression through the promotion of South to South, South to North and regional volunteer programmes, among other models. It is crucial that VSAs fully recognise the value of skills and experience from Southern countries as they work to strengthen their development impact. These indigenous skills and experience can provide a basis for increased reciprocal learning and true development partnerships between the global South and the global North.

Context of International Volunteering

International volunteering is a growing field of practice and research interest. Driven increasingly by globalisation in the 21st century, the scale and diversity of international volunteer programmes are a manifestation of the desire for increased learning about different parts of the world.

Since the late 20th century, international volunteering has been closely linked with conceptions of development that are shaped by geopolitical, historical and economic relationships. Changing patterns of aid to post-colonial and developing countries have been

framed in different ways – from support for liberation struggles to bilateral aid provided by Northern donors to Southern governments to implement social and economic development programmes. More recently these aid relationships have been known as ‘development cooperation’ - a term that suggests a relationship between equals, but which in practice has been dominated by the Northern partners. Skewed notions of development have been supported by the idea that developing countries required the assistance of people from developed countries to help them advance and that individuals from the global North were most able to advise and provide expertise on how development should occur in the global South. These perspectives have inevitably shaped the practice of international volunteering and contributed to the dominance of North to South programmes whereby volunteers (young and older, unskilled and professional) are sent to support poor organisations and communities in the global South.

However, more recently international understanding of development has changed, resulting in more nuanced perspectives and conceptualisation, which increasingly focus on principles including: partnership, mutual learning, and Southern country leadership and ownership. These values emerge in current development discourse such as the Busan Declaration and post-2015/MDG discussions.

These changing conceptions of development have the potential to influence the values underpinning international volunteer programmes and may prompt changes in programme purpose and design. Many organisations engage in international volunteering to promote intercultural learning and development education:¹ these foci are becoming more closely aligned with current development thinking, which promotes the idea that international volunteers from developed countries could learn from the developing countries in which they serve. In some cases Northern sending organisations have become aware that they should aim for intentional capacity building and the sharing of skills, as well as intercultural learning and exchange. Equally significant is the increasing emphasis on how international volunteers apply their learning after their volunteer placement, and the extent to which they share their insights with their peers back home.

International Volunteering: Diverse Approaches

International volunteer programmes approach international development in a variety of ways. Some are keen to foster development education and see short-term exchanges as a catalyst for longer-term thinking and activism. Others see volunteers as contributing valuable skills and building the capacity of organisations and communities to meet development objectives. Still others value a broader goal of fostering intercultural learning and global citizenship.

Emerging good practice and key trends

Conceptualisation of development:

Paternalistic approaches to development and volunteerism continue to influence expectations and practices within international volunteering. However, changes are emerging in the values underpinning volunteering programmes – with some moving from a ‘saviour’ mentality to one of partnership, intentional capacity building, skills sharing and building relationships through reciprocity, intercultural learning and exchange. Best practice approaches in

¹ The aim of development education is to promote consciousness of global interconnectedness and a deeper understanding of the root causes of the factors influencing development.

general depend on partnership building and the recognition of people's inherent assets, a commitment to equitable and sustainable development, carefully structuring programmes for mutual learning/empowerment and the continued engagement of returned volunteers with development issues once back in their home country.

Types of volunteers involved:

Most programmes engage young people or skilled/professional adults, primarily middle class and from the global North. However, increasingly programmes are involving a wider diversity of volunteers – including diaspora, retired people, families, and traditionally marginalised groups. More could be done strengthen this approach, and to create opportunities for non-traditional groups such as disabled volunteers, those with chronic illness, people from economically disadvantaged areas or marginalised women to volunteer internationally.

Partnerships and volunteer orientation:

Two types of engagement seem common between host and sending organisations. One reflects a power imbalance in which the sending organisation conceptualises the programme, recruits and orientates volunteers, and host organisations have little involvement. The other invests in promoting a more equitable partnership between host and sending organisation, where the host organisation is involved in deciding on the 'best fit' for its strategic purposes, which impacts on volunteer placement, training and orientation. The study identifies good practice such as finding ways for host organisations to participate in the recruitment and management of the volunteers, and for the volunteer placements to be closely aligned with the strategic goals of the host organisation.

Areas of Innovation:

If innovation is defined as 'change that adds value', the study identifies a number of new practices that are developing and could contribute to best practice in international volunteering in the future.

Diversity in directionality of volunteering

Although North to South programme models continue to be dominant, making it difficult to build reciprocity into international volunteering partnerships, there is encouraging evidence of increasing numbers of volunteer programmes engaged in reciprocal and South to South volunteering models. These can enable volunteers from 'developing' countries to volunteer in 'developed' countries, acknowledging the skills and capacity available within developing countries. Also, some work is taking place to form partnerships with local organisations in Southern countries to develop regional volunteering models. This creates opportunities to learn about regional social cohesion, develop a shared understanding of regional development and learn about the role of Northern countries in that process.

Engaging corporate stakeholders

Corporate volunteering between countries is an emerging field, which has much potential but needs to be carefully managed. Risks in this emerging area include the fact that for-profit players could

be driven by interests that may be contrary to development goals and that corporate volunteering perpetuates power imbalances between rich and poor. In this context what is at stake is positioning profit making actors within the public interest, which would need to be done with some reflection. However, where priorities are articulated by communities in host countries and partner relations are shaped to support change, it is possible that partnership models can be designed to address capacity gaps without approaching the relationship in a paternalistic fashion.

Online Volunteering

Finally, with the massive reliance on information and communication technology it is surprising that more organisations do not have opportunities for online volunteering, which would make it possible to engage a much wider range of professionals in response to a demand for specific skills. Online volunteering is growing, but is still limited. Its potential advantages include volunteers being enabled to advertise their skills and capacity, and host communities having the capacity to match their needs to the volunteers' skills more closely than is presently the case. Furthermore, online volunteering can extend volunteer opportunities with lower costs, and ICT could be used both to train and orientate volunteers and to engage volunteers on a long-term basis. Potential disadvantages include that online volunteers may not learn much about host organisations if they have no orientation or hands-on community experience, which could potentially reinforce stereotyped perceptions of poorer countries.

Recommendations

VOSESA has developed a number of recommendations based on the research. These are presented here in summary form and in more detail in Section 8 of the report.

Recommendations for volunteer sending agencies (VSAs)

1. VSAs should place development at the centre of programme design and see it as the starting point for their organisational rationale. Development should be conceptualised in line with the discourse reflected in the Busan declaration and post-2015 discussions. Sending organisations should engage with Southern perspectives on how development objectives should be achieved.
2. Partnerships reflect how organisations give expression to values such as social justice and human rights. VSAs should ensure that partnerships with host organisations are formed on an equal footing and that host organisations are involved in volunteer recruitment, orientation, debriefing and evaluation.
3. International volunteering should be framed as an opportunity for reciprocal learning, both in terms of development education and intercultural learning. The focus should thus be on how the volunteer experience can improve the understanding of the international volunteer about global relationships and the causes of persistent poverty and underdevelopment, and how host organisations can strengthen their work by involving international volunteers. This requires intentionality with regard to providing opportunities for reflection and learning throughout the placement and on the volunteer's return.



Hazel Murray volunteering with the Hope Foundation at a creche in Panditya, Kolkata, India.



Volunteer Donncha O'Donnchadha poses with a local football team in Malawi

4. Too often international volunteering is de-linked from the realities of local volunteer engagement. Rather than operating in isolation from or in competition with local volunteering, international volunteers should be encouraged to engage with local volunteers. Not only does this ensure that volunteering of all kinds is valued, but it maximises the potential for mutual learning.
5. VSAs need to engage a wider diversity of volunteers. This would ensure that more volunteers are available for placement, as well as expanding the number of people who can gain experience of and contribute to solving development challenges. This is in line with post-2015 discussions, which seek to maximise the potential of all people to meaningfully engage in development. To do this well, VSAs need to become more aware of the stratified socio-economic context in which they are operating, and that challenges of inequality, poverty and disadvantage are present in their Northern as well as Southern countries.

Recommendations for international volunteer sending and funding organisations

1. There is a need to invest in the promotion of South-South, South-North and regional volunteer programmes to ensure that Southern capacity is recognised, maximised and shared, and to promote reciprocal learning. The experience of VSAs is vital, but this does not mean that programmes that work in the North can be exported to the South. Adaptations are required to account for the socio-economic realities that many potential volunteers face, as well as the regional travel barriers that might constrain freedom of movement. The promotion of such programmes will depend on forging effective regional partnerships and securing the required funding.
2. Private sector stakeholders are increasingly playing a role in the development space and there is potential for volunteer sending agencies to engage meaningfully with these new actors around how best to use their skills and expertise to contribute to international development and poverty eradication.
3. There is a need to understand the different models of online volunteering and evaluate their activities to determine good practice in this emerging field.

Recommendations to Comhlámh

1. The good practice recommendations pertaining to VSAs discussed above are alluded to in Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice. However, the central relevance of development in programme design, and the integral involvement of host organisations in programme design and implementation, needs to be more visible in order to demonstrate equity in the partnership and shape good practice in terms that work for both the sending and host organisations.
2. Organisations which are excelling at engaging with development issues, engaging meaningfully with host organisations, promoting learning opportunities, and encouraging local volunteering should be celebrated as examples of good practice.
3. Comhlámh should also continue to raise awareness of new and emerging models of international volunteering practice, including corporate and online volunteering, and what might constitute best practice in these areas.

Future Areas of Research

While the area of international volunteering is one which is gaining increasing attention and research at a policy and academic level, it is still generally an under researched area. Further research is required to better understand and critically reflect on the contribution and impact of international volunteering on development, and ways in which good practice can be strengthened. Key areas of potential further research include the following: the impact of volunteering on host communities, corporate volunteering, online volunteering, reciprocal, regional and South-South volunteering.

About this report

International volunteering is a key feature of a globalised world. With some of its earliest roots in the activities of missionaries seeking to expand faith-based membership by doing good in distant places, international volunteering in its contemporary form is today strongly influenced by globalisation, which has prompted the growth of voluntary service across different countries and altered its form in many parts of the world.

Comhlámh, the Irish Association of Volunteers and Development Workers, seeks to promote a just, equitable and sustainable world. Its mission is to foster good practice and critical engagement in volunteering and action for development. Through its Code of Good Practice for Volunteering Sending Agencies, it encourages networking between organisations running international volunteering programmes. This report was commissioned to identify different models of international volunteering, look at how they contribute to development, highlight examples of good practice and innovation within international volunteering, and determine emerging trends and growth areas.

The report was researched and written by Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa (VOSESA), a research NGO based in Johannesburg, South Africa. Following the introduction, the report explores the contextual background of international volunteering in relation to development practice and goes on to provide an analytical framework for the practice of international volunteering. It then outlines the methodology used by VOSESA for identifying models of international volunteering. In articulating the different models of international volunteering, the report focuses particularly on innovation, providing examples of each model and discussing their inherent opportunities and constraints. Finally the report discusses good practice emerging from the organisational analysis and identifies areas of innovation in this regard.



UCDVO volunteer performs with local children at the Kan Gladly summer camp in Haiti.



Nurses Jenny, Ruth and Shaunna on placement with Nurture Africa at the Health Centre in Wakiso town, Uganda.



Campaigners, including returned volunteers, highlighting global justice issues in Dublin.



EIL volunteer Oisin poses with his class in Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Globalisation has been a driving force in fostering closer connections between countries, organisations and people, and has prompted increased interest in learning about others. One key and increasing mechanism through which this occurs is international volunteer placements, in which people from a particular country volunteer their time to serve in another country. Sherraden et al. (2008) use the term “transnational volunteering” and define it as “an organised period of voluntary engagement and contribution to society across borders with little or no monetary compensation.”

Transnational volunteering may include unilateral forms where volunteers from one country serve in a different country or multilateral forms where volunteers from different nations serve together in one country (Perry and Imperial 2001, Sherraden et al. 2006). For the purposes of this report the same definition applies. However, in line with Comhlámh’s use of the term, we refer to international rather than transnational volunteering.

International volunteering has come to garner support at the national level with governments (mainly, but not exclusively, in the global North) often investing heavily in sending their citizens to volunteer in other countries. Examples of this include the American Peace Corps, the German *weltwärts* youth volunteer programme the Taiwanese Medical Corps and programmes supported by the governments of France, the United Kingdom, Korea, Japan and Australia, to name a few. International volunteering historically was the domain of a few large organisations including VSO, UNV and Skillshare, but this has changed and today there are hundreds of players involved in international volunteering, including non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations and private companies. For example, research into the economic value of volunteering commissioned by Comhlámh (2013) indicates that over 60% of volunteer organisations in Ireland were founded since 2000. The demand for international volunteering opportunities on the part of individuals wanting to serve is seen most clearly in the increasing popularity of voluntourism opportunities, which demonstrates the interest in this form of volunteering at the individual level. Canada World Youth (CWY) reports² that requests for international volunteering opportunities are increasing, particularly amongst youth. In some cases this is itself a product of globalisation, since some of these young people are the offspring of parents who come from different parts of the world, and who want to connect with their parents’ countries of origin.

The growth in international volunteering has the potential to produce innovation and public good. But international volunteering can also have negative impacts, particularly when it serves to reinforce paternalistic relationships reminiscent of colonialism (Perold et al, 2011 & 2012). How then can we understand and analyse the international volunteering landscape, particularly accounting for areas of growth and potential, whilst encouraging good practice that promotes social justice, equitable development, an understanding of the root causes of global poverty and solidarity? In the next section of the report, some of these questions are addressed as we assess how the goals of international volunteering have shifted over time.

2 Discussion between Canada World Youth representative and VOSESA, July 2010.

2. The changing goals of international volunteering

2.1 Impact of development discourse on international volunteering

International volunteering does not occur in a vacuum and is not value free. It is not simply a means for people to meet people from other parts of the world. Rather it is intricately linked with understandings of development and is shaped by geopolitical, historical and economic relationships. The link between international volunteering and development stems from pre-colonial days when Christian missionaries travelled to distant places with the purpose of developing or ‘civilising’ the local populations through biblical teachings. While missionaries may not have strictly been volunteers, the idea of going elsewhere in order to serve, help or develop took root. Colonial relationships only served to strengthen this idea. As Ellis (2011: 6) states, “a century ago, Europeans had no qualms about referring to their self-appointed role as patrons of Africa as a civilising mission.” This paternalistic notion, whilst increasingly frowned upon in international volunteering practices today, has historically characterised a great deal of international volunteering relationships and continues to play a role in the expectations of host organisations and beneficiaries in the global South (Perold et al. 2011 & 2012), as well as of potential volunteers. This section of the report briefly highlights how international volunteering has evolved as development thinking has changed. It provides the context against which the international volunteering models discussed later were selected and assessed.

Since the colonial period, development thinking has changed and developed considerably. However, for a large part of the latter half of the twentieth century the dominant model of development was one of modernisation: that is, the idea that countries in the global South should pursue the kind of development path followed by countries in the global North. Modernisation thinking suggested that there were two keys to development. The first involved an economic focus which included shifts to industrial capitalist modes of production. The second was predominantly a cultural focus, which suggested that traditional norms and practices were holding third world (as the term is used in modernisation theory) countries back from becoming like first world countries. It was argued that in order to progress, third world countries had to throw off the “shackles of tradition” in order to step into the industrial era (Webster, 1990).

Within this construction of development, paternalistic notions flourished. These were supported by the idea that developing countries required the assistance of people from developed countries to help them to advance, and a premise that only individuals from the global North were able to advise on how development should occur.

The development industry is particularly susceptible to the idea that African [and other developing] societies can be shaped and reshaped as though they were made of wet clay. At the same time development workers from the rich world persist with a single, simple idea that has been in existence for over 200 years – namely, that Africa [and

other parts of the global South] needs to be improved and that Europeans and North Americans are uniquely placed to ensure that this happens due to the superiority of their technical knowledge. (Ellis, 2011: 6, words in brackets added).

Many international volunteering programmes began in the context of this development discourse, forged as a mechanism through which Northern ideas and capacity could be shipped to assist those in the global South. As a result, the dominant model of international volunteering has historically been and continues to be one that focuses on sending volunteers from developed countries to serve in developing countries for a period of time. The purpose of such programmes have been variously framed around ideas of bringing development to the global South, filling gaps in institutional capacity, and later skills transfer and capacity building. Whilst the motivations behind such programmes may have changed slightly over the years, they are largely fuelled by the original impetus, which is that the global South depends on expertise from those in the global North. In recent years, however, this discourse has changed quite considerably.

While this development discourse held sway in the latter part of the twentieth century, it was not without its critics. Dependency theorists (Frank, 1966) pointed out how the paternalistic relationships that had characterised Northern involvement in third world countries had served to create relationships of dependency rather than producing development outcomes. Although it took some time for these ideas to filter into development practice, the criticisms did take root. Development practice in the latter part of the twentieth century, and particularly in the early part of the twenty-first century began to question the role of developed countries in development aid (Moyo, 2009). Alongside the criticisms of the ways in which development aid had led to dependency, questions were raised about international trade and how it was unevenly brokered to favour countries in the global North, and the role of the IMF, World Bank and Structural Adjustment Programmes in previous decades. Protests at the World Trade Organisation meeting in Seattle in 1999, as well as the establishment of the World Social Forum in 2001 were responses from citizens and social movements in the North and South to the realisation that trade agreements and other international interventions in developing countries were serving to deepen poverty and perpetuate dependency. The World Social Forum continued annually after 2001, providing a meeting place for an international solidarity movement aimed at promoting social justice and highlighting voices from the South.

Alongside these changes, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were introduced and were intended to shape development priorities between 2000 and 2015. The MDGs frame the key concerns rather than the mechanisms through which such priorities are met; that is, while they outline key goals and targets, they do not stipulate how interventions should be developed to meet such goals. The MDGs provided a useful framework and set of targets for international development, but were criticised by civil society for being developed in a top-down manner, and for not addressing the structural, root causes of poverty. Debates about the focus of the post-2015 MDGs are ongoing internationally. However, as we move closer to the end of the MDG period, international discussions have focused increasingly on how development should take place. To this end a call has been made for what are being termed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which pertain to the “non-negotiable” aspects of any development interventions in the future (Forum, undated). These include promoting social development, environmental sustainability and a greater emphasis placed on fostering engagement, and recognising the assets of local people.³ As UNV (2013:1) notes in relation to the role of volunteering in development practices post-2015:

3 For more on the post 2015 debates, see www.beyond2015.org and www.worldwewant.ie.

Voluntary action and civic engagement are key people-centred development resources in achieving sustainable economic, social, and environmental progress.

The changing conceptions of development discourse have the potential to influence the values underpinning international volunteer programmes and may prompt changes in programme purpose and design. Many organisations engage in international volunteering to promote intercultural learning and these foci have been more closely aligned with current development thinking, which promotes the idea that international volunteers from developed countries could learn from the developing countries in which they serve, and that the volunteers' purpose is not to "save" the host communities. Other organisations

have become aware of the need to change their thinking so as to ensure that their international volunteer programmes do not create dependency and reinforce colonial mind-sets and stereotypes, but rather aim for intentional capacity building and the sharing of skills, as well as intercultural learning and exchange.

The aim of development education is to promote consciousness of global interconnectedness and a deeper understanding of the root causes of development issues. A survey of 1,750 international volunteers (with a 26% response rate) undertaken by VOSESA as part of a study on international volunteering in 2010 (Lough in Perold et al, 2011) showed that returned volunteers reported being more closely connected with organisations that work

internationally after their volunteer placement, as well as frequently corresponding with acquaintances or contacts that live in other countries. The returned volunteers reported using their international contacts to link people or organisations in host communities to people or organisations internationally, and giving money or other useful resources directly to contacts living in other countries. The findings also showed that volunteers who stay closely connected with organisations and contacts internationally tend to interact more frequently with people from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds, and are also likely to report having many friends from different racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, and a greater interest in forming friendship or working with people of different backgrounds. This suggests that relationships formed during international service can promote more progressive and unbiased attitudes.

More recently, voices from the global South have joined with progressive organisations and governments in the global North to forge alternatives in terms of development thinking. These alternatives are closely aligned with Amartya Sen's conceptualisation of the capabilities approach to development (1999), which focuses on people's inherent assets. Major development organisations and movements have advocated for a more equitable development practice that recognises and promotes the role of people in their own development. The Busan declaration⁴ of 2011, for example, is in many ways considered a dominant position on how development aid should be practised globally. It focuses on

We believe that volunteering abroad is first and foremost a stepping stone for the volunteers to become global and active citizens who take action to challenge global injustice.

Email correspondence
with Experiments in
International Living

⁴ The Busan declaration is a declaration arising from the fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, which was held in Busan, Korea in 2011. The forum brings together political leaders, representatives from civil society, and the private sector to discuss how to ensure that aid is effectively used to meet development goals, including the MDGs.

four key principles:

- country leadership and ownership of development strategies;
- a focus on results that matter to the poor in developing countries;
- inclusive partnerships among development actors based on mutual trust; and
- transparency and accountability to one another (Oxfam, 2012).

Alongside these principles, there has been greater recognition of the ways in which development and challenges to development occur within a wider policy, trade and environmental context, characterised increasingly in the post-2015 debates discussed above. As such, development organisations and social movements have pressured states in the global North to address critical development needs by assessing their own policies such as those on finance, investment, trade, climate change and environmental responsibility, to ensure that their practices and policies promote rather than undermine development.

From the above principles it is evident that the idea of leadership and investment in development should come from developing countries themselves, and that international involvement in development practice should be guided by partnerships that are forged on an equitable footing and promote the empowerment of local communities. Such thinking is reflected in changes that major international volunteering organisations have been promoting over the last decade. Instead of simply continuing to send international volunteers to host countries in the global South, organisations such as VSO and Skillshare began to shift their programme goals to promote local volunteering more directly. Such organisations have made significant investments in ensuring that their programmes promote the use of local capacity, and that international involvement is an additional resource made available to support this goal.

In addition to these changes there is increasing awareness of the idea that people in the North can learn as much from people in the South as the other way around. Newer international volunteering programmes have started including a South to North directionality in their programmes, or have structured their programmes around reciprocal exchange models which recognise that volunteers from both contexts can learn and impart knowledge and skills. Organisations such as Canada World Youth have been leaders in this regard. The values underpinning such programmes speak to the influence of asset-based development thinking, as well as the promotion of social justice and equity.

This is increasingly evident in reports from and discussions amongst international volunteering bodies, which now tend to focus on the partnership discourse, mutual learning and empowerment (as is evidenced by Progressio – see Box 1). Comhlámh's discussion of development, for instance, notes that ultimately development must lead to empowerment (Comhlámh, 2013). This is in line with the emerging post-2015 development discourse, which calls for an emphasis on human rights, social justice, and equality. A report on the role of international volunteers serving through five UK-based organisations, notes that international volunteering has the potential to:

- enable people to take an active role in improving life in their own countries;
- promote social inclusion and deepen participation;
- foster personal transformation and enable people to empower each other; and

- grow knowledge and experience that can shape development programmes effectively (International Service, Skillshare, Progressio, SPW & VSO, no date).

Box 1: Progressio – understanding the important of partnership in development

Progressio works to tackle situations that perpetuate poverty in developing countries by working towards ‘people powered development’ or by ensuring ‘poor people are empowered to transform their lives.’ They are inspired by their values of respect, solidarity, passion and boldness and see people within the impoverished communities as having the potential to change their lives. Progressio implements its programmes by placing highly skilled development workers with local organisations to develop the capacity of the host organisation in a particular area, and help release that potential.

Because the organisation primarily works in developing countries, about 81% of their development workers are from the global South. Consequently, the organisation has realised an increased level of South-South recruitment. This demonstrates recognition of the capacity and skills that are located in the global South.

Partnership is key to Progressio’s work, with the belief that this is the best way of having the biggest impacts on local communities. As Judith Turbyne, Director of Progressio, Ireland explains:

“Together in partnership, we should be contributing to sustainable development and to a fairer distribution of knowledge, skills, resources, wealth and power.”

In building these relationships, Progressio takes seriously issues of transparency and accountability with their partners. They encourage their partner organisations and communities to nurture such relationships with the communities with which they work. According to Judith:

“Our approach to partnership is based on a ‘two-way learning process’ which ultimately promotes international understanding and cooperation.”

To guarantee that the skills and learning is shared within the organisation or with the host communities on the departure of the development worker, the development worker works particularly closely with counterparts within the organisation. The design of development projects primarily ensures this is achieved. Progressio and the development worker’s engagement with the community is done by utilising their partner relationships with the communities.

The aforementioned report evidences the way in which large international volunteer organisations are focusing on creating partnerships, working more closely with local communities, and promoting local participation in projects. This indicates a shift towards thinking about international volunteering as a factor in development, focusing to a greater extent on mutual practice and learning, and moving away from a paternalistic notion of bringing services and imparting skills to ‘ignorant’ communities. Increasingly the potential of

international volunteering to make conceptual notions of development tangible to people is taking root. As Lewis (2006: 2) notes:

Ideas about development still crucially frame the way in which people in the 'North' think about people in the 'South', and in many cases too, the ways in which people in poor countries think about themselves and the rest of the world. International volunteering can provide tangible contributions to development in the form of skills and other resource transfers, but also perhaps more importantly it can promote international understanding and solidarity.

As a result, any analysis of international volunteering programmes and models must account for the ways in which they demonstrate and reflect development thinking.

Currently, the emphasis in development thinking, as reflected in the Busan Declaration, is on recognising the assets local people bring to their own development to produce equitable partnerships and promote social justice. Good practice in international volunteering must therefore stem from and reflect such values. Ideally, international volunteer efforts should be informed by a framework focused on social justice and social development. Social development focuses on the active engagement between citizens, in this case global citizens, to address local (and global) challenges (Patel, 2003). A social development approach emphasises the empowerment of individuals and argues that efforts should be focused on how greater agency can be achieved. This approach to development is synonymous with Comhlámh's view of development, which equates development with empowerment and social justice. A key assumption informing this study, therefore, is that international volunteering should (but may not) be framed from a perspective that emphasises the agency of local communities, empowerment, equal partnerships and social justice.

2.2 International volunteering & social capital

Alongside the shifts in development discourse that have shaped international volunteering, a second stated goal of many international volunteering programmes is the development of social capital. The concept of social capital originates from work conducted by Putnam (2000), who found that a key resource for individuals and communities lies in their connections to other people and communities. Putnam differentiates between bonding social capital, which refers to linkages between similar groups of people, and bridging social capital, which refers to linkages between different groups of people. For Putnam, bridging social capital is fundamental for advancement of individuals and communities since it opens up opportunities that would otherwise not be possible within communities. An additional form of social capital is linking social capital, which enables people and organisations in positions of power to leverage networks with a view to accessing resources.

The concept of social capital has gained leverage in international development circles (Jeanotte, 2008), and has particularly influenced World Bank discourse, which has been widely criticised on its approach to and impact on development, including the way in which it sees social capital as the panacea to the world's problems. Nevertheless, the idea of building bridging social capital has most certainly influenced the stated aims and objectives of international volunteering programmes.

The idea of bringing different types of people, from different development context, racial, class and educational backgrounds, into contact with one another in a mediated and relatively

long-term interaction⁵ provides the context in which bridging social capital may develop. However, such potential is only converted into actual bridging social capital development under certain conditions, and the benefits of such social linkages should not be taken for granted.

A group of scholars in the social capital debate have developed a conceptualisation of social capital which enriches Putnam's approach. For the French sociologist Bourdieu, social capital is "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a 'credential', which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word" (Bourdieu, 1986:248-249). Essentially, Bourdieu's conceptualisation suggests that individuals have resources through their social connections. According to Edwards and Foley (1999), the differences in people's access to social networks and the types of social networks they have access to shape social and economic outcomes. For Bourdieu the type of social capital an individual has access to is determined both by the extent of their networks, as well as what each of these people in his/her network offer in terms of economic or cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

This conceptualisation also suggests that for international volunteering to serve as international social capital for all the parties involved, certain macro, micro and individual adjustments have to be put in place. The implications for international volunteering is that bridging social capital is more likely to develop when equitable partnerships are in place between host and sending organisations, when volunteer placements are long-term and demand driven (i.e. host organisations drive the requests for volunteers and influence their selection) (Lough et al., undated), and where there is a mediated learning process of interaction and reflection. The development of social capital therefore doesn't occur automatically. It is rather an outcome of carefully considered and managed relationships of mutuality and learning. It is likely therefore that as social capital development comes to be increasingly recognised as a potential outcome of international volunteering, programme goals and models need to become more explicit about their value base and more intentional in their partnership design.

2.3 International volunteering and global citizenship

A further longstanding aim of many international volunteering programmes has been the notion of promoting global citizenship. This brings together aims of promoting development education, fostering peace based on understanding between people from different contexts, and generating a sense of connectedness, responsibility and belonging in a globalised world, as well as an understanding of the root causes of global poverty and how citizens can engage positively to try to change them. These inter-related concepts require more explanation.

According to Lough (2011) there is a popular view that international volunteering contributes

5 While most countries do not collect statistics on whether international volunteering is mainly short term (defined by us as between 2 and 12 weeks) or longer-term (defined by us as between 6 and 24 months) figures from the US show that almost half (42.8%) of US international volunteers volunteer for 1-2 weeks, 16.4% for 2-6 months, 15.6% for more than 6 months and 14.7% for 3-4 weeks (US Current Population Survey, cited in Lough, 2012). Research undertaken for Comhlámh by PMCA (2013) indicates 92% of international volunteer placements from Ireland are for 3 months or less duration. Research in Europe (presented by Prof Dr Alexander Thomas at a SAGE Net conference in Bonn 2009) suggests that extensive impacts on the volunteers can occur in short-term placements, particularly in regard to identity formation, while VOSESA's research cited above (Lough in Graham et al, 2011) shows some evidence of deeper understanding of development occurring in international volunteers who are involved with the host organisation for longer periods of time.

to intercultural learning and competence – a key skill to have in a globalised world. Intercultural competence refers to “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006: 12). It could be argued that intercultural learning and competence, borne of immersion in or exposure to another culture, is fundamental to shaping shifts in development thinking, since it requires individuals to step outside of their own worldview and attempt to understand as fully as possible another’s worldview.

In this way, as a concept, intercultural competence is closely related to development education, which refers to the process of people learning about the real and underlying causes of development issues. Development education has a range of key principles including focus on global interdependence; concern for social and environmental injustice; building people’s skills and capacity to take action for change, and inculcating critical thinking (Bourn 2008; Bown 2009; Diprose, 2012). The Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) (2011), which Comhlámh and some Irish volunteer sending agencies are members of, refers to development education as “an educational response and process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the shared development of our world. By engaging people critically in and with our increasingly interdependent world, development education aims to challenge global inequalities, and works towards creating a more just and sustainable future for our planet.” Development education also requires an individual to step away from commonly held discourses of development thinking, to better understand the global relations and power imbalances that shape poverty and inequality.

Intercultural competence and development education can complement one another in many respects. Both can also contribute to the notion of global or regional citizenship. While most commonly used to refer to citizenship of a particular nation, the concept also refers more broadly to an idea that one belongs to a particular community and, by virtue of such belonging, carries responsibilities for the wellbeing of that community. In the era of globalisation, the notion of being a global citizen has begun to feature. This suggests that individuals should have a sense of responsibility, not only for their own communities,

The process of intercultural learning involves understanding and appreciating cultural differences, and progresses from seeing one’s own culture as the centre of the universe to seeing it as one of many equally important cultures around the world.

Interview with American
Field Service

We recognise that one of the main problems to be addressed within the shortterm international volunteering sector relates to programmes sending “non-expert” young people and adults for short periods too often being perceived as “development work”, while the development education aspect is neglected.

Email correspondence
with EIL Ireland

but also for raising awareness and participating in actions that promote the wellbeing of communities and environments the world over. The notion of global citizenship emerges from the recognition of the interconnectedness of countries and communities, and thus introduces the need for solidarity, recognising that actions in one space have consequences in other parts of the world, and that the struggles for social justice and addressing the global injustices of inequality, poverty and economic power are on-going. Development education activities may have the promotion of global citizenship as a goal.

In addition to the notion of global citizenship, many international volunteering programmes have focused on regional citizenship. Examples include programmes such as the European Voluntary Service, and SayXchange in Southern Africa. These programmes aim to foster a sense of citizenship and belonging within a smaller geographical area. The focus may thus be on engendering recognition of commonalities between countries within a region, promoting regional understanding and peace, and transmitting skills and building capacity within a region. The SayXchange programme, for instance, is particularly focused on peace building and emanated as a response to the xenophobic violence that erupted in South Africa in 2008 against nationals from other Southern African countries living in the country. The programme explicitly seeks to foster understanding in the region through the exchange of young people within the Southern African Development Community (SADC).⁶

From the above, it is evident that in addition to a development agenda, at their best international volunteering programmes also aim to foster social capital, development education, intercultural competence and regional or global citizenship. To this end, some international volunteering programmes are also interested in how service can contribute to peace building.

2.4 International volunteering and peace building

International volunteering, as has been discussed above, has the potential to build bridging social capital and promote intercultural understanding. In these ways it can also contribute to peace-building.

Volunteers can contribute to establishing and preserving positive peace, which can be defined not just as an absence of war and conflict, but as a set of conditions that mediate ever-present conflicts. Positive peace can prevent conflicts from turning violent, and sustain social and political order. (Lough & Mati, 2012:2)

However, volunteers, both local and international, can also be mobilised to work directly in the areas of peace-building and peace-keeping. Volunteers have been used in peacekeeping and peace-building processes around the world. The United Nations Volunteers, for example, runs such a programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo (see Box 2 below).

Existing research in the DRC (VOSESA, 2011a) shows that peacekeeping missions handled exclusively by technical officers and full-time staff have been criticised by those inside and outside UNDP and other international public agencies. The areas criticised include an overly hierarchical system that underestimates local skills and local management, resulting in a lack of ownership, demoralised staff, inadequate ethnic diversity and the exclusion of women (Pratt, 2002). Lough & Mati (2012) note that ‘community-centred sustainable development’

⁶ SADC is a regional community in Sub-Saharan Africa, made up of 15 member states. The aim of the community is to foster regional solutions to promote development, peace and security, and economic growth in the region.

or 'people-centred development' is increasingly viewed as critical to successful peace-making and peacekeeping interventions (VOSESA, 2011b). Community centred approaches seek to solve problems through interpersonal engagement and action, human relationships, and participatory decision-making in local communities. Volunteering is considered central to successful community-centred development interventions (Leigh et al., 2011).

The research in the DRC suggests that international volunteers bring ethnic, geographic and gender diversity into peacekeeping, as well as fresh and often more optimistic perspectives to their work than staff from development agencies who have been working in high conflict zones for long periods and frequently become demoralised. Volunteers may be more ingenuous and less disheartened about the difficulties associated with peacekeeping. Some informants observe that the idealism and affirming mentality of new volunteers makes a significant difference to community members who have struggled for years in high-conflict situations (Mavungu 2010). At the same time, local volunteers provide important "added value" peace-building processes, because they reflect knowledge of local environment, traditions and values rooted in the local community, which are often overlooked or misunderstood by external stakeholders (Lewis, 2005).

Finally, perhaps the most frequent reason given to justify volunteerism in peacekeeping is related to its perceived cost-effectiveness. If volunteers receive compensation for their services, it is typically well below market wage rates. In addition, community members report that volunteers work after hours and often pay from their own pockets to provide services when programmes are unwilling or unable to help (Mavungu, 2010). Although engaging volunteers may be seen as an effective way to stretch official development aid funding, it is not unproblematic.

Despite the perceived advantages of mobilising volunteers in high conflict regions, challenges must also be acknowledged and assessed. Effective facilitation of volunteers requires extensive training, and a supportive and enabling infrastructure. Support for volunteers is often lacking – particularly at the local level – and their safety in high-conflict zones is another important consideration. In addition, volunteers might also be viewed as amateurs, which may reduce the respect they receive from community members. Respect may be particularly low for female volunteers working in a male-dominant culture.

Thus, some international volunteer programmes can work to foster peace-building and promote peace for development, in addition to nurturing social capital, a sense of global citizenship and effective development education. While these aims are noble, the question emerges as to who international volunteering programmes primarily intend to benefit – volunteers themselves or the communities they serve?

2.5 Who benefits from international volunteering?

Alongside the changes in development discourse and the changing aims and goals of international volunteering, conceptualisation of who benefits from international volunteering programmes has also come under the spotlight. Since the purpose of international volunteering was formerly framed as bringing development to communities, the primary beneficiaries would have been defined as being those communities in Southern countries. In more recent thinking about international volunteering, and in line with the focus on development education and intercultural learning and competence, there has been a wide acknowledgement that international volunteering brings significant benefits to the volunteer as well as to the sending communities, who learn about other cultures via the returning volunteer. While there is little research focusing on the benefits to host organisations and



Participants on Comhlámh's Coming Home Weekend for Returned Volunteers.



Engagement possibilities at Comhlámh's What Next course.



Comhlámh campaigns for global trade justice.



Volunteer Noel Brennan with Sister Medhin, Coordinator of the Daughters of Charity in Northern Ethiopia.

communities, a great deal of research focuses on the range of benefits to volunteers (see for instance Moore-McBride, Lough & Sherraden, 2010; Lough, Moore-McBride & Sherraden, 2009). Increased skills, work experience, the development of social capital and intercultural competence are amongst the benefits accruing to individual volunteers.

Relatively less research focuses on the benefits to host organisations and some research even points to the potential pitfalls of international volunteering that are experienced by host organisations (Perold et al., 2011; Tiessen, 2012). These include reports that host organisations do not always see international volunteers as benevolent actors, but sometimes view them as instruments of Western imperialism or agents of neo-colonialism. Stereotypes abound: among host communities international volunteers may be uncritically regarded as members of a “superior race” from a wealthy society. As such, they are viewed as bringing additional resources, credibility and marketability to host organisations, regardless of their actual value to the host organisations. Conversely, stereotypes produce myths among international volunteers, such as perceptions of Africans as poor, incapacitated, weak, lazy, unresourceful and dependent. The perceptions of host organisations suggest that international volunteers do not always link prevailing conditions of material deprivation in host communities with historical and current injustices of colonialism, the structures of the global economy, and the global trade and aid regime.

There are also risks to organisations of hosting international volunteers, particularly with regard to how international volunteers affect local volunteers. Very often, international volunteers, particularly highly skilled volunteers and those who are professionals volunteering their time, are paid stipends or living allowances that in local currency amount to more than local wages. When such volunteers are working with local volunteers, the differential stipends afforded to local and international volunteers is inherently unequal and is a cause for concern, since it may point to the differential value placed on local and international volunteers. In some cases this may even lead to a situation in which local volunteers are regarded as “cheap labour.”

Host organisations in Tanzania and Mozambique report that in some cases international volunteers demonstrate a greater interest in tourism and social activities, and lack commitment to serving the needs of the organisation in which they are placed (Perold et al., 2011). Host organisations in both countries reported that volunteers tend to be focused on their own ideas about the need to produce change within the organisations in which they

Box 2: Volunteers for Peace

One prominent example of volunteer support is the United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV), which in 2010 deployed 629 UN volunteers across 40 locations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to work alongside other international and Congolese volunteers on various projects within the UN Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO). While other agencies have sent international volunteers to the DRC, MONUSCO still has the largest group of international volunteers in the country (UN, 2011).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) manages the involvement of international and national volunteers in a number of peace building programmes by restoring social networks and helping to build social capital; in demobilisation, disarmament and the reintegration of ex-combatants back into society; and in advocating and raising awareness of human rights and protection (UNV, 2007).

are placed and are less concerned with understanding the context in which such changes need to be sustained. Challenges emerged of poor communication, including international volunteers circumventing communications protocols agreed between the partners, thus further contributing to weakening the role of host organisations within the partnership.

In some cases host organisations are not adequately prepared for the volunteers: since they do not have much influence on the profile of volunteers that they receive, it is difficult for host organisations to plan in advance how to best involve volunteers in their activities. Conversely, the volunteers are not always adequately prepared for their placements. Furthermore, although international volunteers may socialise well with members of the host community, it appears that relations with staff in the host organisations are much more distant. Sometimes even cool.

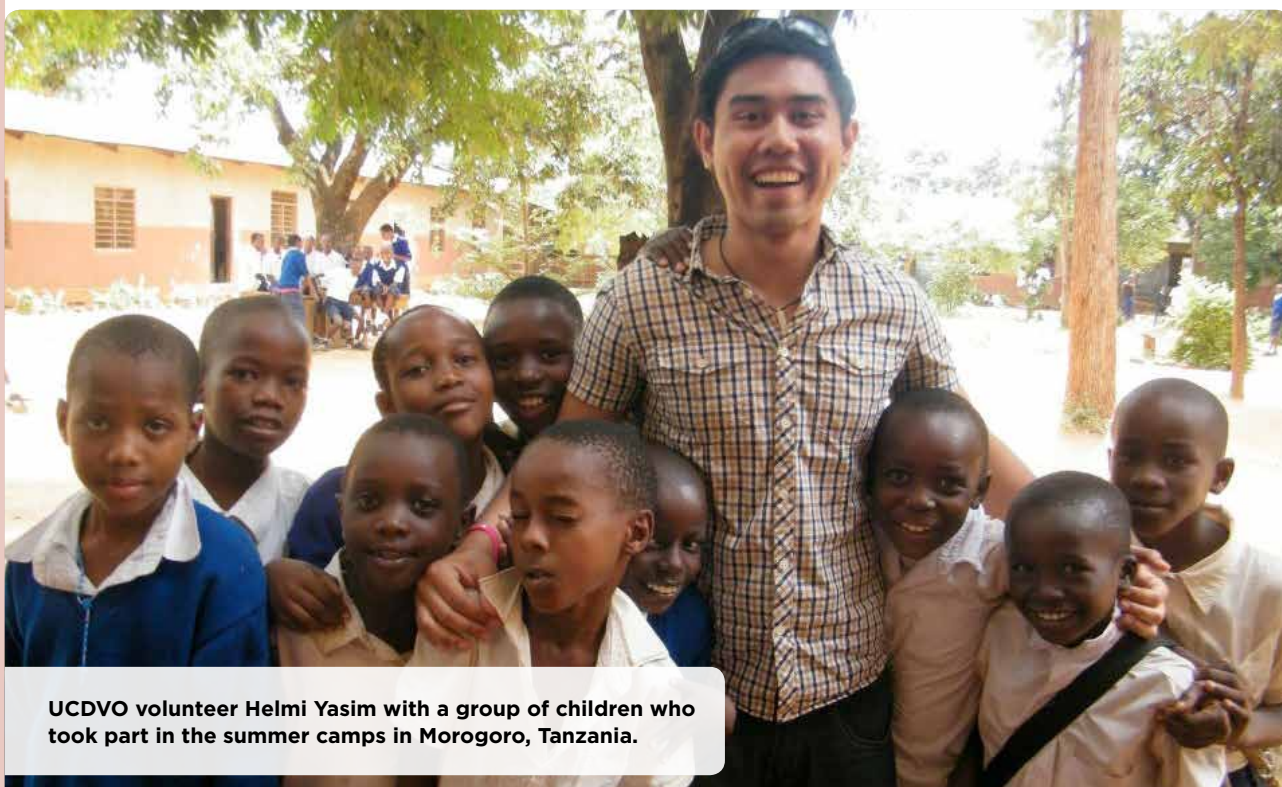
Nevertheless, it is evident that benefits do also accrue to host organisations and communities. These include the development of social capital, the acquisition of human resources at low cost and capacity development amongst others (Perold et al. 2011; Lough et al., 2010; Irie et al., 2010; Jones, 2005). In the study in Tanzania and Mozambique (Perold et al., 2011) some host organisations and members of their communities saw the international volunteers as being proactive even within a context of scarce resources. They were seen to contribute to the strategic development of their host organisations and, once back home, advocated for the interests of organisations in developing countries. This makes it clear that despite the unequal power relationships between the global North and the global South; international volunteering can make a positive contribution to local organisations that deliver much-needed services in poor and far-flung communities.

Clearly, international volunteering has the potential to generate a range of benefits to all stakeholders involved in the process, from sending to host countries and organisations, down to the individuals volunteering and hosting. However, benefits do not accrue automatically, but rather accumulate when there are equal partnerships in which host organisations are able to plan for and utilise volunteers well, and where there are structured opportunities for learning and reflection. Such aspects of programming must be planned for in the programme design (Sherraden, Lough & Moore-McBride, 2008). How organisations conceptualise and plan for benefit must thus be considered when assessing international volunteering models.

Having discussed some of the contexts within which international volunteering takes place, and the range of goals for international volunteering programmes, the report now turns to outlining an analytical model used to understand international volunteering programmes.

3. An analytical model for assessing international volunteering programmes

What is evident from the above is that international volunteering programmes both shape and respond to the international political and economic context of development, aid and trade. How organisations position themselves and whether they engage in current development debates profoundly shape their programme goals, models and implementation strategies. Organisations that support current thinking about forging equitable partnerships, recognising local capacity and assets, and promoting international partnerships and citizenship, are likely to reflect these beliefs in their mission and vision statements. These values should also influence their partner interactions, the stated purpose of their programmes, the design of their orientation programmes, and the directionality and duration of their programmes. Thus, their development perspective is likely to shape their programme models. The analytical model outlined below demonstrates how this might be conceptualised and demonstrates the key aspects that were used in VOESA's assessment of international volunteering models for this report.



UCDVO volunteer Helmi Yasim with a group of children who took part in the summer camps in Morogoro, Tanzania.

**International development, aid and trade context
including historical and current relationships
between partner (host and sending) countries**

Context of sending country/region

Economic, political and cultural/religious setting for International Volunteering (& associated goals)
State policies and stance on development and international relations
Shape and strength of civil society, and relationship to state
Legal environment for International Volunteering
Funding environment (and goals of funders)

Context of host country/region

Economic, political and cultural/religious setting for International Volunteering (& associated goals)
State policies and stance on development and international relations
Shape and strength of civil society, and relationship to state
Legal environment for International Volunteering
Funding environment (and goals of funders)



Sending organisation context

Conceptualisation of development/ benefit
Aims and objectives, mission and vision
• Location & relationships
• Funding environment and requirements
• Institutional capacity

Host organisation context

Conceptualisation of development/ benefit
Aims and objectives, mission and vision
• Location & relationships
• Funding environment and requirements
• Institutional capacity



**Type & quality
of relationship**



**Extent of
control over**

Type of volunteer programme

Direction
Duration
Location
Training and support
Who volunteers



**Extent of
control over**

The model above shows the intricate relationships between components of an international volunteering programme and the ways in which organisations align themselves or respond to the development context and shape their programme models.

The model demonstrates our belief that the international development aid and trade context, the historical relationships between host and sending countries, and the dominant discourses of development profoundly shape the organisations involved in international volunteer programmes, the relationships between organisations, and ultimately the ways in which volunteer programmes are designed. In addition, the goals of funders may shape the orientation of host and sending organisations. At the organisational level, decisions about how development and benefit are conceptualised, reflected in an organisation's mission and vision, goals and aims, will affect the nature of relationships between host and sending organisations, as well as programme design. In turn the nature of the relationship between host and sending organisations, and the level of power and control that each has over the design of the programme and the selection of volunteers will also shape the outcomes of the volunteer programmes.

For instance, if the dominant discourse of development is one that promotes social justice, empowerment and partnership, and the organisations involved in the programme articulate this by promoting development education, social justice and cross-cultural learning, then the nature of the relationships between organisations is likely to be one of partnership rather than patronage. In this case there is likely to be relatively equal involvement and investment from both host and sending organisation in the design of the programme and the selection of volunteers. If both organisations recognise that there is benefit for all parties involved, and both organisations have institutional capacity and funding, then there is likely to be intentional investment in designing programmes that facilitate benefit to all parties. This may occur, for instance, through strong orientation and training programmes in which both organisations are involved; constant support and care to volunteers during service; carefully orchestrated interactions between international and local participants; managed opportunities for reflection; and post-service training and involvement. In contrast, when development is conceptualised simply as a process of bringing capacity from the North to help the poor of the South, a paternalistic relationship between host and sending organisation is likely to be dominant in which the sending organisation controls the nature of the relationship and as well as the programme design. This is unlikely to create a focus on the benefits that could accrue to international volunteers and usually carries little investment in structured opportunities for reflection on the part of the volunteer or the sending organisation.

Thus, the context of each organisation – both in terms of capacity and values – as well as the broader context, profoundly shape the nature of relationships between organisations, and ultimately the shape of the volunteer programme.

Based on the analytical model developed, a dataset of organisations involved in international volunteering was assessed according to a wide range of criteria to determine the nature of international volunteering. The next section of the report outlines the methodology used to assess these organisations and to analyse the nature of international volunteer practices.

4. Methodology

Initially 90 organisations were selected to ensure regional and programmatic diversity. Following on from this, a purposive selection of organisations was conducted from the initial 90 organisations. The criteria used for selection included:

- Diversity in terms of location of organisation;
- Diversity in terms of directionality of programme (North-South, South-South, reciprocal exchanges);
- Demonstration of good practice; and
- Demonstration of innovation.

A documentary and web-based analysis of the 42 organisations selected provided some insight into particular trends amongst such purposively selected organisations. These trends are not necessarily indicative of wider trends, but rather of trends in good practice and innovation.

Further criteria were applied to the 42 organisations to identify organisations with particularly interesting examples of good practice and innovation. These were identified for further investigations through email correspondence, further document analysis and in the case of the six organisations selected as case profiles, telephonic interviews. Criteria used to select these organisations included:

- Direction of volunteering;
- Types of volunteers involved;
- Conceptualisation of benefit and development;
- Intentionality in terms of partnerships and/or how volunteers are orientated;
- Particular aspects of good practice; and
- Innovation in programme design

For further information about the methodology please see Appendix G.

5. The practice of international volunteering

As has been mentioned above there is wide-ranging diversity in the way that international volunteering is currently being practiced. This section of the report focuses on diversity in terms of the shape of volunteer programmes, which is defined in terms of the direction of volunteer activities, the duration of service, the types of volunteers involved in the activity and the location of service. These criteria were assessed across the 42 international volunteer organisations selected. They are discussed here briefly, with greater focus being placed on the next section, which discusses the values and goals underpinning international volunteer programmes.

5.1 Directionality in international volunteer programmes

While there is increasing diversity in terms of the directionality of international volunteering programmes, the most dominant form of international volunteering continues to involve sending volunteers from the global North to the global South for a period of service. Of the 42 organisations just over half only conducted North to South volunteering programmes. In the wider context of international volunteering, far more organisations are likely to be engaged in such programmes, but even in the context of selecting organisations for innovative practice, many still demonstrate the historical model of North to South volunteering. A further fourteen organisations run North to South programmes in addition to other directions of volunteer sending (South to South or South to North). Our analysis of the organisations reviewed shows that an increasing number of organisations are sending volunteers from the South to the North, with almost half of the organisations including this feature in their programmes. Again, this should not suggest that this is indicative of a wider trend since these organisations were selected for innovation in their programmes. However, none of these organisations exclusively run South to North programmes. Rather, most seem to be reciprocal exchange programmes involving sending volunteers from the North to the South and volunteers from the South to the North, rather than running exclusive programmes targeting volunteers in the South and sending them to the North. Only six of the organisations in the sample run South to South exchange programmes, and three of these run regional exchange programmes.

This may in part be due to the limited number of programmes operating exclusively from the South. While there are a range of civil society organisations in the South both receiving and sending volunteers most operate such programmes in partnership with organisations in the North. Very few organisations are exclusively located in the South, sending volunteers from the South. The exceptions from the organisations we examined are two organisations that have established regional volunteer programmes – America Solidaria and SayXchange (discussed below). It is not clear why organisations located in the South have not started more international volunteering programmes. This may likely be due to the focus on what are perceived as more pressing needs – dealing with key local development challenges. It

may also be as a result of limited partnerships between Southern countries or a lack of funds.

While various economic blocs exist, the most recent being BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), these currently tend to limit their collaboration to the realm of economic cooperation. Glosny (2010) points out that while there is potential in the BRICS alliance, this is limited by fundamental differences and competition between the countries that make up the grouping. This confirms Mendes Aldrighi's (2009) opinion that while the grouping makes sense from a global investor point of view, it doesn't necessarily take into account individual country needs, purpose, interest, and power.

Nevertheless, the BRICS Summit underway in South Africa at the time of writing (March 2013), produced evidence of some willingness to talk about collaboration around economic and infrastructure priorities, as well as social issues. One encouraging outcome relates to the proposed creation of a BRICS Development Bank. In response to this proposal, a 2013 Youth Communiqué was issued at the Summit, stating that the Bank should focus on "funding projects that encourage sustainable development to ensure a thriving world for future generations; projects with a focused plan and tangible deliverables; and mechanisms for better communicating the work of the project to the BRICS Development Bank and the general public." It was also recommended that a separate youth programme funding area be created to focus on "improving and developing educational facilities (primary, secondary, and tertiary); inter-BRICS youth projects; skills development for youth; and a youth employment focus."⁷ While these developments will take time to result in real collaboration that affects citizens on the ground through volunteer and other programmes, it is important that the BRICS discourse has started reflecting an emphasis on social as well as economic development.

The shifts in the directionality of volunteer sending may stem from an increasing recognition that there is much to be learned from people located in developing contexts, and that there is skill and capacity in both developed and developing contexts. This recognition may then result in a greater focus on mutual or reciprocal exchanges rather than simply sending volunteers from the North to serve in the South.

It is unclear why so few South to South volunteer programmes exist. This may be an area for further investigation and investment, since it holds great potential for regional integration and peace building. Interestingly, the three regional exchange programmes are facilitated by organisations in developing countries. But the other South-South exchange programmes are operated by major international volunteering agencies including VSO and UNV, with the final South to South exchange programme being facilitated by FK Norway, which decided to complement its reciprocal exchange programme by investing in a south to south volunteer programme (See box 3 above). This suggests that there needs to be far greater investments by organisations located in the global South in promoting international volunteering in their own region or more broadly, within developing contexts. Organisations in the South may face financial constraints in doing so and thus may require support from Northern countries. However such relationships should not serve to reinforce dependency relationships. It should be noted that while there are funds available in Southern regions (for instance through regional bodies and development banks), regional volunteering programmes are seldom viewed as priorities and thus struggle to access such funding.

In addition to South-to-South volunteering programmes that extend across regions, only

7 http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/saiia/events/brics_youth_communicqu_16032013.pdf



UCDVO volunteers participate in a pre-departure training facilitated by Comhlámh in 2012.



Emilia Sumburane, a volunteer with SayXchange, at Morutathuto Primary School in Soweto, South Africa.

two organisations in the database were running regional volunteer programmes. America Solidaria is a newly established organisation located in Chile, which promotes the exchange

Box 3: Promoting South-South models of international volunteering – FK Norway

FK Norway has built its international volunteering programme on the values of reciprocity, mutual learning and global connectedness. As they note on their website:

“We are convinced that the world becomes a little more just when people get to know each other better and create values together.”

In line with this they have developed a north to south programme, which rests on ensuring that southern professionals are placed in Norway at the same time as northern volunteers serve in the country from which the southern international volunteer is drawn.

Building on this model, FK Norway has introduced a South-South exchange programme in Africa in which institutional partners from 3 countries, are involved, namely, Kenya, Burundi and Uganda (Malakwen, undated). The programme involves the reciprocal exchange of young professionals (aged 18-35 years) who work with a foreign host for a period of 10 months or more. These professionals range from physiotherapists, engineers, journalists, and designers, to young activists who swap places across national frontiers.

Through working with each other, the organisations share knowledge and experiences. The main objective of this programme is to promote development in the South through the transfer of capacity and knowledge between professionals in the South (Malakwen, undated). An advantage of the South-South exchange programme is that the professionals spend less time making cultural adjustments and is seemingly a more effective instrument for transfer of technical skills and expertise (Ingdal, Shreshta & Mussa, 2009).

Besides the aim of building institutional capacity, FK Norway believes that promoting exchanges between young people in the South also facilitates increased understanding between individuals, institutions and nations; building bridges and promoting peace; the promotion of regional networks that foster increased participation and cooperating between institutions in the South; and building change agents for a more just world in the global South.

In addition to the programme in Africa, FK Norway is connected with about 400 organisations and institutions for the exchange of young people across different countries in the South.

of volunteers between different countries in South America. SayXchange (see box 4 above) is a recently established organisation that promotes the exchange of young people between South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. Regional volunteer programmes such as these offer exciting opportunities for greater regional understanding, peace building, the development of a consciousness regarding regional development and interconnectedness, as well as the possibility of regional collaboration.

5.2 Duration of international volunteer programmes

Information regarding the duration of volunteering is not widely available, with a few exceptions. A study conducted by the Center for Social Development at Washington University (St Louis, USA) in 2001 surveyed 210 programmes operating in 57 countries and found that international volunteering was the most common form of engagement, and that volunteers are generally placed for an average of 7.3 months (Moore-McBride et al in Perold, Stroud & Sherraden, 2003). An unpublished study conducted by VOSESA in 2008 surveyed a range of international sending organisations, mainly from Europe, which showed that most of the respondents ran programmes of 6-12 months in duration, with one extending to 24 or 36 months. Comhlámh's forthcoming study on the economic value of volunteering in Ireland shows that 92% of the volunteering programmes that originate in Ireland are of three months duration or less.

Box 4: Promoting regional peace and collaboration – SayXchange

Mati (2012) explains the SayXchange programme which was developed by the Southern African Trust. The programme was implemented in South Africa following the xenophobic attacks in 2008 which saw nationals from a range of African countries being attacked by South Africans in various parts of the country, spurred by the belief that the foreign nationals were 'stealing jobs and houses'. The SayXchange programme was an African initiative, developed by African organisations and funded by an African funder.

The programme currently operates in Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and South Africa and was developed with the aim of promoting regional integration and developing a Southern African regional identity amongst young people. The programme runs for five months and is a reciprocal volunteering programme. Volunteers between the ages of 18 and 25 are usually placed in community-based organisations (CBOs) of the host country. Alongside the service component, which is intended to promote leadership amongst young people as well as build a spirit of volunteerism; the programme also focuses on growing regional awareness on cultural and social issues amongst young people who are emerging leaders in their communities.

An early evaluation of the programme demonstrates that the volunteers mention learning a new language, developing friendships across borders, and increased self-esteem as some of the key impacts. In addition, all research participants discussed how the programme had been life-changing in terms of challenging the way they considered other cultures. Intercultural learning, as intended, seems to be a key outcome of the programme (Mati, 2012).

Of the 42 organisations surveyed for this research, ten indicated that they run programmes that are longer than six months in duration, with most lasting one year. Seven of these involved professionals or other highly skilled volunteers serving in their area of expertise and of these, three were run by large, well-known and long-established international volunteering bodies (VSO, UNV, and Australian Volunteers International (AVI)). The other organisations involved young people volunteering internationally, and their stated aims and objectives focused on development education and developing intercultural competence. According to Lough et al (2010) longer-term service programmes are more likely to result in the development

of bridging social capital. Similarly, long-term programmes are also associated with more positive intercultural learning outcomes since the longer term engagement facilitates more in-depth immersion in a culture, including engagement in day-to-day norms and beliefs. Longer term engagement tends to go beyond the “tourism” experience of culture where individuals are only exposed to the interesting dances, foods and dress codes, rather than to the deeper rooted value systems of a culture, which are only made evident once trust has been built (Perold et al., 2011).

Those organisations that run shorter-term programmes noted that while longer-term service is desirable, shorter-term programmes enable international volunteering to appeal to a wider range of people. This is because such programmes offer greater flexibility both to professionals (who may not be able to take much time off of work) and younger volunteers (who may want to offer their time over a vacation period). The relative loss of time for intercultural learning is said to be offset by the gains in the numbers of volunteers that have such opportunities opened up to them.

5.3 Location of international volunteer programmes

Location refers to the area in which the volunteers are located during the period of service. The vast majority of organisations send volunteers to one particular location for a set duration. Thus on-location volunteering is the most dominant form of international volunteering. Our study identified only two organisations that conduct virtual international volunteering initiatives amongst the organisations profiled. These organisations connect people in particular countries with organisations in other countries, and facilitate a process by which volunteers can contribute to these organisations virtually. ‘Bankers without Borders’, a programme of the Grameen Foundation, has a particularly innovative approach to its international volunteering programme in this regard (See Appendix D for more detailed information). Connecting volunteers to online training opportunities provides the means for constant engagement and training of volunteers throughout the period of service, in a flexible manner. In addition, it means that volunteers are connected to a virtual network that serves to facilitate longer-term engagement with the organisation. ‘Bankers without Borders’ notes that a great deal of their actual volunteering also occurs virtually. In fact, 50% of their volunteer engagement occurs online, with a further 25% happening on location. 25% of their volunteering involves a combination of face-to-face contact and virtual contact. This means that Bankers without Borders is able to reach both a wide range of volunteers as well as a large number of organisations in a fairly cost-effective manner. As Shannon Maynard, Chief Talent and Knowledge Officer at the Grameen Foundation, noted in a telephonic interview: “In order to ensure that we are strategic, we need to meet the needs with the resources available. We try to be economical and thoughtful, and this can lead to a large number of remote projects.”

The potential of online mechanisms to connect with volunteers was also mentioned by EIL. They note their use of social media as a means to retain engagement with volunteers once they returned from their period of service. UNV connects volunteers from around the world with organisations in order to facilitate access to skills such as translation and legal support without having to incur the costs of on-location volunteering. Online volunteering offers opportunities for flexible volunteering engagements where individuals may desire to serve, but cannot afford the time and financial commitments that many locally-based international volunteer programmes require, as well as reducing the costs (both financial and environmental) of connecting volunteers with volunteer opportunities. Online

volunteering also opens opportunities for organisations to access vital skills that they may otherwise not have access to. However, such volunteering does come with challenges. For instance, host organisations are limited in their ability to manage virtual volunteers, relying solely on trust and goodwill for the success of the relationship. While online or virtual international volunteering remains very small, it is a clear area of potential growth in terms of international volunteering models. More research is required to assess the extent to which online volunteering overcomes the power imbalances that conventional international volunteering faces.

5.4 Who volunteers in international volunteer programmes?

As mentioned above, international volunteering could be said to have had its earliest roots in the work of missionaries who travelled overseas to do what were seen as good works in distant places. International volunteering shares some of these characteristics although it relies on people who are either not paid or are paid relatively little.

Of the sampled organisations, the majority of international volunteering programmes target either highly skilled professionals, or young people (ranging from secondary school students to young professionals). Historically, the trend in international volunteering was to send professionals or highly skilled volunteers to volunteer in developing countries. Longer-standing programmes such as those run by VSO and Skillshare have their roots in such programmes. This was commensurate with the development discourse at the time when they were established – using skills available in developed countries to deal with development challenges elsewhere.

The more recent focus on intercultural learning and global citizenship has meant an increasing focus on targeting young people. This is in all likelihood driven by particular concerns about youth unemployment worldwide. From the perspective of sending organisations the premise is that early interventions in a person's learning are likely to produce higher returns for global citizenship than later interventions. However, VOSESA has come across perceptions among some host organisations that the increase in international volunteering by young people straight out of school is being used by Northern governments to 'export' their youth unemployment problems, especially as the financial crisis continues to bite, at least temporarily. VOSESA's study on international volunteering (Perold et al, 2011) shows that by serving in host organisations in the South, these young, inexperienced volunteers gain opportunities for training that they would not otherwise receive in their home countries and host organisations have commented that "we taught them everything they know", particularly in terms of technical skills.

In the dataset for this study, most of the organisations reviewed run programmes exclusively for professionals, exclusively for young people or for both groups. Those engaging professionals tend to focus on a particular sector such as healthcare, finance, or not-for-profit management. Far fewer organisations offer programmes for a wider range of target groups.

We see this diaspora programme as a key mechanism for reversing the "brain drain" that Africa has experienced.

Interview with American
International Health Alliance



Graduation ceremony at Friends of Londiani's Alternative Rites Programme in Kenya.



Participants at Comhlámh's What Next course.



Music Harvest volunteers in Nablus, Palestine.

Two organisations examined targeting corporate organisations to facilitate international volunteering opportunities amongst their employees. One recruits retired professionals and another three focus on recruiting families and groups of friends or colleagues. One organisation – American International Health Alliance (AIHA) (See Appendix B for detailed information) – runs a diaspora programme that targets Ethiopian healthcare professionals living in the United States. In this programme, Ethiopians are recruited to serve in their country of origin. This programme taps into a desire on the part of a diaspora community to give something back to the country in which they were educated. By connecting Ethiopians with Ethiopians, many of the power imbalances and potential cultural challenges that come with international volunteering are reduced. Host organisations, the Ethiopian government, and volunteers themselves report on the success of the programme in terms of skills transfer, addressing capacity challenges, and fostering an environment of diaspora contribution to development beyond remittances.

Australian Volunteers International has recently embarked on a programme, which recruits aboriginal youths to participate, alongside other international volunteers, in a sustainable development project in rural India. This programme stemmed from AVI's own realisation that their volunteers were largely drawn from middle class, privileged communities. AVI wanted to broaden the social base of the programme and determined to ensure that their practices overcame the barriers that existed to aboriginal communities' engagement. The programme thus far has been relatively small, and is complimented by national volunteer programmes that recruit aboriginal youth. The impact of such a programme is yet to be assessed.

The examples above demonstrate the potential and value of tapping into a wider range of target groups and unlocking the potential that may exist in connecting such a target group to international volunteering opportunities.

None of the organisations profiled in the appendices specifically mentioned marginalised groups such as people living with a disability, marginalised women, native/aboriginal communities, or those who have been convicted and who have been sentenced to community service or served prison sentences. Some though have started to engage in programmes that target different classes of young people. SayXchange for instance focuses on young people who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. However, most programmes are yet to extend their reach to poorer groups. In a context in which there is a dominance of programmes focusing on youth and professionals, there is potential for organisations to think more broadly about the target groups from which they recruit and what their programme might offer volunteers drawn from such groups. Involving more diverse groups not only aligns with the current calls in the post-2015 development agenda for greater participation of marginalised groups (UNV, 2013), but could also draw in untapped skills, as in the case of diaspora communities volunteering in their country of origin. A wider range of target groups also means that more people are exposed to learning opportunities in the international context. Having discussed briefly the dominant and diverse shapes of volunteering programmes, the report now turns to the important features of what determines international volunteering models – the values that underpin such programmes.

6. Values underpinning international volunteer practice

As demonstrated in the analytical framework shown above, decisions about what we have termed the 'shape' of volunteer programmes rely largely on institutional and contextual values prevalent in the wider development landscape, as well as the values of the sending organisation with regard to development, conceptualisation of benefit, and stated aims. However, one limitation of primarily undertaking a document analysis and a web-based scan is that this method relies on publicly available information, which is often designed for marketing or public relations purposes. Document analysis as well as short email follow-ups provided the opportunity to seek more in-depth information from organisations about the issues that were otherwise not readily evident.

As noted previously, less information is available about critical aspects of volunteer programmes such as how they negotiate relationships with host organisations or the content and methodology of their orientation programmes. In many cases the framing of an organisation's mission and vision, and their stated aims and objectives are indicative of their core values since mission and vision statements tend to be shaped by the way in which the organisations view their relationship to the world, and how they situate themselves in relation to development discourse.

6.1 Conceptualisation of development and benefit

In our analysis of how organisations conceptualise benefit, organisational vision and mission statements were assessed to gain insight into how the organisation viewed development. Organisational mission and vision statements may suggest some alignment between the organisation's conceptualisation of development and current development discourse as reflected in the post-2015 development debates discussed above.

The analysis reveals that most organisations tend to discuss their contributions to the challenges that exist in developing countries. Thus, they view development as addressing challenges in poorer countries and describe what their organisation and their volunteers can do to address these challenges. Often the goals of organisations are aligned with the MDGs. Key issues noted by organisations include the very broad notion of poverty as well as more targeted needs in education, health, and HIV/AIDS. This suggests that there is recognition of the major development challenges in the world, as reflected in the MDGs, and a commitment to addressing these. However, it also indicates that the development thinking is still strongly grounded in the notion of volunteers from developed countries serving as primary agents to address development challenges in developing countries. Much less evident was any discussion of partnerships, collaboration and learning in the context of development.

Box 5: Challenging development discourses – Development Perspectives

Development Perspectives (DP) aims to provide high quality Development Education opportunities for adults and young people. DP's work is interesting because of the reciprocal learning processes which encourage debate around discourses of development. Their aim is to encourage people to re-evaluate their perspective, to see beyond the current reality and find ways of making the world we live in a just and equal place. The work of DP is informed by the idea that we live in an interdependent world, which presents challenges that require systemic thinking to provide solutions.

DP strives to run an effective and sustainable learning organisation and network by engaging targeted groups of agents of change in Development Education programmes to bring about a deeper knowledge of development challenges and to implement effective actions to lessen poverty and inequality. The DP Development Education programme makes it possible for participants to get the opportunity to view the world differently through learning in different environments as well as participating in groups made up of people from diverse backgrounds and skill sets. This has a deep and profound impact with many people realising that irrespective of where you are from, you can impact the global by acting locally. As DP notes in their mission:

“Development education is an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It seeks to engage people in analysis, reflection and action, for local and global citizenship and participation.”

DP's volunteer programme is eight months long and consists of three phases. Phase One takes place in Ireland and focuses on an introduction to development education and involves team building exercises, group dynamics, introduction to development, introduction to reflection, preparation and logistics, debates and discussions and talks from a variety of speakers involved in the development field.

Phase Two is the Overseas Phase which gives participants the chance to examine development in the context of another country and what issues affect people from that country. Irish participants work within a local community on a project that is chosen as beneficial by the local people. Local development activists are invited to facilitate workshops which gives a better idea of the reality on the ground for people living in that community.

The final phase of the programme takes place in Ireland. Participants focus on the reflection of the individuals experience placing it into context of their daily lives. African partners who have taken part in the second phase of the programme travel to Ireland to contribute to the reflection, evaluation and exhibition/presentation as workshop facilitators and educators.

In evaluating the impact of their work, DP notes that volunteers report that they are more inclined to think critically about development issues, and have experienced a change in the way they think about and consider development since their placement. Volunteers also report that their participation contributed to strengthening their options in the labour market. There is little doubt then that the volunteer placements result in a great deal of benefit to volunteers. DP is less conclusive about its wider development impact (Development Perspectives, undated).

Some international volunteering programmes focus on single development issues, without a wider awareness of the interconnectedness between development issues and their root causes. Voluntourism is a primary example of such single-issue focus and one that has gained in popularity (Birrell, 2010; Daldeniz & Hampton, 2010). Voluntourists tend to engage in voluntourism because they are interested in low-cost travel, are considering a career change, and/or because they feel a desire to help in a particular development area (Ibid.) Such volunteers tend to volunteer for short periods of time on a single issue (often focused on children or environmental issues). Many organisations promoting voluntourism are in fact tourism companies (Birrell, 2010), suggesting that they are not equipped to engage volunteers more meaningfully in development challenges or intercultural living, leading to perhaps more harm than good being done (Ibid.). In contrast Corti et al (2010) argue that there are potential benefits to voluntourism, which are similar to those of short term international volunteer placements aimed at promoting development education. They suggest that there may be a life-changing moment for volunteers who then may commit to longer term engagement with developing countries, and that local communities benefit from increased tourism. Further research is needed to understand this area of international volunteering and in particular its impacts, but the findings quoted earlier in this report (Lough in Perold et al, 2011) show that long-term engagement is more likely to occur with longer-term placements. However, a concern may be that voluntourism programmes, unless connected with organisations that promote development education, run the risk of perpetuating traditional power relations between those from Northern and Southern countries.

That said, our analysis of the organisations selected showed that there is an increasing focus on equity and social justice. This suggests that there is an awareness of the historically skewed nature of development interventions, the inequalities of relationships between developing and developed countries, and the injustices that shape poverty and produce the related development challenges. While many organisations demonstrate their commitment to these considerations in development thinking, Development Perspectives (see Box 5 above) provides an example of an organisation that clearly and actively promotes ways of shifting the development discourse. Organisations may frame their purpose as contributing to rectifying perceived wrongs and contributing to global social justice. This thinking is more in line with the latest, more critical development discourse, as framed in the Busan declaration discussed above. Although this is no guarantee that in practice the organisations do not conduct their relationships with host organisations in a paternalistic fashion, at least the rhetoric acknowledges the need to think through conceptions of development in terms of the values of empowerment and justice. This suggests that certain international volunteering organisations are being influenced by contemporary development thinking.

Our analysis found that little mention is made of partnerships and collaboration in mission statements and other publicly available material. Most organisations continue to conceptualise their engagement with poorer countries in terms of the volunteers from the North bringing skills and capacity to organisations in the South. Only two organisations discuss the notion of an exchange of skills between North and South, and three noted that there is potential

We prefer not to use the terms developing and developed. We are different and there is much to learn from one another

Email correspondence
with Experiments in
International Living
(EIL Ireland)

to exchange skills and capacity across developing regions. One organisation explicitly discusses working in partnership with local volunteers and staff, although in practice more organisations do include this as a component of their international volunteering models. Based on VOSESA's own experience of working with organisations such as VSO and UNV, there is evidence that such organisations have developed strategies in various parts of Africa to ensure that much of their work is aimed at promoting and supporting local volunteer efforts, rather than expanding international volunteering programmes. This is a major change from the practice adopted by these organisations in the early to mid-2000s.

While most organisations frame their objectives around addressing development challenges and locate the benefit in the countries and communities within which volunteers serve, many recognise the benefits that accrue to the volunteers themselves. It is predominantly organisations that focus on development education and intercultural learning, such as EIL, AFS and CWY that recognise the benefits of international volunteering for volunteers as being primary, framing their objectives around this benefit, with the developmental benefits to host organisations being secondary. Very few organisations recognise, in their stated aims and objectives, the benefits to the wider society to which volunteers return.

The two dominant ways of conceptualising benefit are thus in terms of developmental benefits to host communities, and the educational and cultural benefits to volunteers. Organisations that send professional and highly skilled volunteers are more likely to frame the benefit as being the development of host communities, while organisations involved in intercultural learning programmes, particularly those targeting young people, are more likely to emphasise the benefit for the volunteers as being primary. This suggests that the benefit continues to be defined in terms of host organisations or the international volunteers. Until the impact of development education is more equally evident for both parties, we must question the extent to which international volunteering as an international practice of engagement is seen as mutually beneficial to both parties.

6.2 Intentionality of learning

For many of the programmes we examined, contributing to development challenges was the primary focus of the programme. For others however, there was a commitment to ensuring that volunteers themselves learned during the programme. Organisations focusing on development education for volunteers, as well as those whose primary goal was intercultural learning, demonstrate a particular commitment to their volunteers' learning experience.

Across the organisations that were assessed, information pertaining to investments in learning experiences was not always evident. It is thus difficult to state how many organisations focus specifically on learning experiences in their programme design. However, specific organisations that did mention their focus on learning were targeted for further analysis and some were interviewed. While all international volunteer programmes contain an element of learning by virtue of individuals being placed in different environments, fewer organisations actually invest significantly in an intentional learning process. Some organisations presented evidence of investing a great deal of time and effort in their programme design to ensuring that volunteers gain the most from the placement as a learning experience.

Such organisations may run extensive orientation programmes before the period of service, and may also run post-service programmes that provide opportunities for reflection and

discussion. Some also include in-service training and reflection opportunities. Intercultural learning is not something that happens automatically, nor is it an event. Rather it is a process that requires moments in which volunteers are provided with the tools and opportunities to reflect critically on their own worldview and values, and consider how these might differ from the values of others. Similarly, effective development education also requires opportunities to reflect on the experiences of poverty and other development challenges, considering global linkages and causes.

AFS Intercultural and Experiments in International Living (EIL) Ireland are two organisations that demonstrate significant investments in ensuring that intercultural learning takes place. This requires strong investment in their orientation and post-placement programmes. EIL, which frames their volunteer experience almost exclusively around the development education that volunteers engage in, notes that through their structured and relatively intensive orientation and post-placement debriefing programmes, volunteers demonstrate a critical shift in the way they perceive the world and think about development. This experience may in fact act as a “catalyst” for a profound shift in their worldview and subsequent actions.

Reflection and the growth of self-awareness are some of the ways in which AFS encourages in-depth learning among volunteers.

Interview with American Field Service

In terms of intercultural learning, AFS uses guided structured reflection as a means to assist volunteers to adapt and become consciously competent in a new culture. This has been proven to help volunteers reach a level of unconscious competence where cultural adaptation becomes natural and real. AFS hinges its training and learning facilitation on experiential learning which focuses on reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, abstract experimentation (role plays) and learning from actual experiences. Reflection and the growth of self-awareness are some of the ways in which AFS encourages in-depth learning among skilled volunteers, and equips them to fit in with the host organisations and communities in which they serve.

Box 6: An organisation continually learning about development – SAGE Net

SAGENet is a network that brings together South African and German host and sending organisations involved in the weltwärts youth volunteering programme. The purpose of the network is to create the spaces and opportunities for these organisations to learn from one another. Conversations and conferences provide opportunities to raise and debate difficult questions about how relationships between organisations are managed, the extent to which practice facilitates development education amongst volunteers, and whether or not practices reinforce or challenge paternalistic relationships. The network ensures that the participating organisations continue to reflect on their practices and positions them as continuously learning organisations in a field of practice that is constantly evolving.

As a feature of good practice, where organisations invest in structured opportunities for reflection by volunteers, before, during and after service, there is a much greater chance of the volunteer experience being a change experience – one that changes the way volunteers consider themselves in relation to other cultures, and how they view development challenges. In a recent publication on international volunteering produced by SAGE Net (2011), Prof Alexander Thomas examines the challenge of reciprocity for intercultural learning in the context of the weltwärts experience in South Africa. He points out that active and experiential learning, accompanied by opportunities for critical reflection, are all necessary for people to become competent in intercultural exchange. These competencies are part of the asset value of international voluntary service, which can equip people to participate successfully in processes of globalisation and internationalisation.

The book also contains reports on efforts made to formulate guidelines for quality management in international volunteering through a collegial approach. One study found that German conceptions of quality management cannot be easily transplanted into other countries. From the host organisation perspective, issues of mutuality, reciprocity, cooperation and open and genuine communication between the partner organisations are some of the hallmarks of quality.

In addition to creating spaces for intentional learning amongst volunteers, an area of innovation lies in being a learning organisation. The available evidence suggests that very few organisations intentionally demonstrate organisational learning as a key aspect of their programme design. Whilst organisations will no doubt reflect on their vision and mission strategically from time to time, few organisations have an in-built, continuous organisational learning perspective in their programmes. Two examples that emerge from our sample in this regard are SAGE Net (see Box 6 above) and Canada World Youth. The SAGE Net publication (SAGE Net, 2011) includes an in-depth assessment of host organisation perspectives of the programme, written by host organisations. It provides insights into how the colonial experience in African countries shapes the expectations of host organisations and volunteers; and how international volunteering could be better framed as a practice that can contribute to reshaping entrenched power relationships; perspectives from volunteers about what they struggle with and how to better manage their expectations and experiences; reflections on how to improve partnerships to enhance the quality of programmes, and forging new directions in intercultural learning (for instance moving beyond intercultural learning to experiencing trans human learning, that is, learning about the inherent value of other human beings regardless of culture).

Canada World Youth (CYW) has also demonstrated a strong commitment to organisational learning. In assessing their reciprocal volunteer programme, they realised that a core element that was missing was the learning that would accrue to volunteers from the South through volunteering in other regions in the south. Based on this programme assessment, CWY embarked on the development of a new programme, which promotes South-South volunteer exchange.

6.3 Investment in partner relationships

A further area of interest emerging from the analytical framework is the extent to which sending organisations invest in relationships with partner or host organisations. The data surveyed reveals very little evidence about how sending and host organisations interact, indicating a need for further research. However, based on work conducted by VOSESA with various organisations in previous research (Perold et al., 2011), it is evident that certain organisations place a great deal of emphasis on cultivating partnership relationships with the

organisations in which volunteers serve, or (in the case of reciprocal exchange programmes) the organisations through which volunteers are recruited.

The nature of relationships between host and sending organisations is fundamental to the impact of the volunteer programme. In certain cases, sending organisations may engage with host organisations in ways that are paternalistic, and which reinforce dominant power relationships. Evidence from a study on the impact of international volunteering in two African countries revealed that host organisations are often grateful for the investment of extra human resources in the form of international volunteers, but that they are not consulted on what kinds of volunteers would be most suitable to their activities, and are not involved in the recruitment, selection and training processes (Perold et al., 2011). In many ways the host organisations could be perceived as receiving “hand-outs” in the form of volunteers from sending organisations, serving to reinforce dominant relationships of aid and development. Such relationships are unlikely to foster the space in which volunteers can learn to overturn common perceptions of development.

In contrast, some sending organisations may invest in developing partnership relationships with host or partner organisations. CWY is a good example of this (see Appendix E for further information). The organisation invests a great deal of time in building long-term partnerships. Their vision is an equal partnership model that not only enhances the outcomes for host organisations, who have a greater say over recruitment and management of volunteers, but also benefits volunteers who are able to volunteer in organisations with which CWY has long-standing partnerships, that have developed based on trust.

In such instances of partnership, host and sending organisations develop relationships over a long period of time, work together on the design of the programme, decide together on what kinds of volunteers might be required for service areas, and conduct the recruitment and selection process in partnership. In some cases, host organisations may even be involved in the pre-service training in the volunteer’s country of origin.

It may be the case that strong partnerships are better placed to lead to different models for international volunteering. For instance, if host organisations feel that they are on an equal footing to sending organisations, there is the potential for them to shape what kinds of volunteers the programme targets, and to argue for the need for mutual exchange programmes rather than North to South programmes.

A key area of good practice in international volunteer programmes thus concerns greater investment in nurturing an equitable working partnership between host and sending organisations.

6.4 Sustained engagement

Increasingly, as discussed above, one of the goals of 21st century international volunteer programmes is to develop a sense of global citizenship. In this era of globalisation, nurturing a sense of belonging to the world beyond one’s own borders, learning about how different countries are connected, and developing a sense of responsibility for actions beyond one’s own country become important aspects of a programme’s objectives.

Many of the organisations reviewed demonstrate a commitment to the objective of developing global citizens. This is articulated in different terms such as ‘long-term active citizenship’, ‘development education’, and ‘global consciousness’. Many of these



UCDVO volunteer Varsha Eswara Murthy receives a warm welcome from the children at Care and Share, Vijayawada, India.



Suas Volunteer Niall assisting at a school in India.

organisations are thus invested in ensuring that volunteers continue to use their experiences and learning from their volunteering experience and enrich global perspectives at home by engaging actively after their return. . A number of sending organisations thus develop opportunities for returned volunteers to meet, sustain their learning, get involved in fundraising and advocacy campaigns, or to continue a relationship with the organisation or community in which they served.

Box 7: Promoting long-term post-placement engagement – SERVE

SERVE runs relatively short-term volunteer programmes focusing on education as a means to address inequality. The programmes are designed to ensure that the placement is the catalyst for the volunteer's longer-term engagement in development issues. Returned volunteers are therefore encouraged to be advocates for change from home. To promote this, SERVE engages returned volunteers in four ways:

- **They facilitate Solidarity Groups - groups of returned volunteers who meet once a month to provide a space for people to engage in discussion about development issues.**
- **They encourage the returned volunteers to engage with programmes and activities run by other organisations such as Comhlámh, the Centre for Global Education and the Irish Aid Volunteer Centre.**
- **They encourage returnees to speak in their schools, churches, workplaces and any other public spaces about their overseas experiences and development issues.**
- **They develop a leadership pool of individuals who have shown an interest in leading future volunteer groups**

SERVE reports a high success rate in putting such structures in place to keep volunteers engaged. Over the last ten years they have seen an increased number of volunteers staying involved as advocates of development action, and even choosing to move into professions in the development field.

Research conducted on the perceived impacts of international volunteer engagement demonstrates that even a short-term placement (of four weeks) can have some effect on the willingness of a volunteer to continue some form of active engagement in their home country, and to their sense of being a global citizen (Lough et al. 2009). While this may happen as a natural outcome of the volunteer experience, it is much more likely to be sustained when organisations invest in opportunities for returned volunteers to continue their civic engagement in the longer term.

Certain sending organisations are thus demonstrating increased commitment to investing in post-service programmes that continue to engage volunteers. EIL, for instance, has developed a seed fund which returning volunteers can apply for in order to establish projects that will continue their engagement in development issues once they return home. The fund awards small grants of between €100 and €500 to volunteers and pairs such volunteers



The staff from Kinderland school in Ibadan, Nigeria with Laura McGrath, an EIL volunteer from Dublin

with mentors who help them to establish projects and programmes aimed at continuing their civic engagement. EIL also ensures connection with its returned volunteers by linking them to social network sites and posting new information on such sites, thus establishing an online community. Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst in Germany has an extensive network of lobbying and advocacy opportunities in which volunteers can engage upon their return. SERVE (see Box 7) has a strong expectation that volunteers will continue to engage in meeting groups and advocacy opportunities on their return. This seems to be a key area of good practice and innovation as more organisations recognise the need to keep volunteers engaged. AIHA (profiled alongside and in Appendix C) noted that a key area of weakness in their programme and one that they intend to address is in maintaining contact with returned volunteers and creating opportunities for continued engagement with them.

6.5 Sustainable development

In addition to the long-term engagement of volunteers, a further marker of good practice in terms of development is that of sustainability. The Sustainable Development Goals, currently being discussed globally, regard sustainable development practice, both in terms of environmental sustainability and long-term effects of development interventions, as key aspects of good practice (UNV, 2013). International volunteering investments, if in line with current development thinking, should therefore result in sustainable interventions at the local level, which when volunteers leave, are able to continue running with the support of local volunteers and staff. Thus, volunteering should not fill capacity gaps without contributing to the capacity and ability of local people to continue running projects. AIHA ensures that this is done by matching volunteers with a local staff member for skills transfer, and by encouraging volunteers to engage local staff in training opportunities. A good example of sustainability in development interventions is Camara, which runs a programme that aims to install technology in resource poor schools and train teachers to be able to use such technology. Through ensuring that teachers are trained in the technology, and that teachers can train other teachers, Camara recently decided that it is no longer necessary to send volunteers to the sites in which they work, since the programme has resulted in enough capacity at the local level (see box 8 above).

Box 8: Planning for sustainability – the case of Camara

Camara is an international organisation dedicated to using technology to improve education and livelihood skills in disadvantaged communities around the world. The organisation has built a proven model of 'education delivery' that is both sustainable and highly accessible. Their aim is to use education for poor communities to break the cycle of poverty. They mainly use technology to improve education and livelihood skills in disadvantaged communities around the world.

Their case is especially relevant from a sustainability point of view. Camara currently operates seven Education Hubs in Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, Uganda, Lesotho, Tanzania), one in Jamaica and one in Ireland. All Hubs operate as social enterprises and are financially sustainable after one year. Camara adopts a social enterprise model that sells the Camara package to schools at heavily subsidised prices making them affordable and valued to even the most disadvantaged communities. Old computers are also sent to Camara and loaded with relevant educational software before being distributed to schools. A range of training programmes are designed to meet the individual needs of school teachers. In Africa this programme covers basic computer literacy skills and courses in areas such as 'Train the trainers', and maintenance.

Camara has recently taken the decision to suspend sending volunteers overseas from Ireland. They have successfully trained local staff to ensure long term support. The volunteers were successful in building capacity at the hubs, as well as providing Train the Trainer training to hub staff and volunteers. Camara is a good example of volunteering towards sustainability, and of careful questioning around the need for and role of volunteers.



Campaigners highlight global economic injustice outside Dublin's Central Bank.



Habitat for Humanity Volunteer John Ryan and Chilean Maestro Daniel relax together in a home they have built.



Comhlámh campaigns for trade justice at the Castle Palooza music festival.

7. Opportunities & innovation

Innovation is a term that is often used and seldom defined. The organisation Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) defines innovation as “change that adds value” (2007: 6). According to this definition, innovation must involve a new way of approaching the international volunteering field, and must add value. Added value can take multiple forms. Given the discussion on good practice and organisational values above, innovation should ideally add value in challenging stereotyped notions of development, or further the goals of development as outlined in the Busan declaration. Innovation is needed to create opportunities for more people to be involved in international volunteering and to address traditional power relations (between the global North and the global South) in the promotion of learning, peace and understanding.

ICP notes that innovation emanates from a deliberate response to an identified gap or challenge in a field. In this regard, many of the programmes considered in this study are involved in innovation, primarily in the way programmes are increasingly structured to challenge traditional perspectives on development. Four key areas of innovation emerge from our analysis. These include innovation in directionality, recruitment of new groups of volunteers, engaging corporate stakeholders, and providing online opportunities for volunteering.

7.1 Directionality – south-south

As has been discussed above, the predominant form of international volunteering has historically been that of sending volunteers from the global North to volunteer in countries located in the global South. This is still the dominant direction of volunteering, a model which reinforces the notion that skills and capacity emanating largely from Northern countries are needed to address skills gaps and scarcity in the South (Fulbrook, 2007). Such models can serve to reinforce traditional views of development. Our analysis shows, however, that the directionality of volunteering is becoming more diverse, with a number of organisations including reciprocal or exchange volunteering in their programme offerings. These enable volunteers from developed countries to volunteer in developing countries, and vice versa.

An innovative approach to directionality that was demonstrated amongst a small number of organisations is an increasing interest in South to South volunteering. This involves sending volunteers from one developing country to another. Such innovation demonstrates recognition that skills are not only located in the North, to be transferred to the South, but that those in the South also have capacity to share. In this way South to South volunteering challenges the traditional power relations in international volunteering and offers opportunities for learning amongst developing nations, which traditional modes do not.

VSO, FK Norway, Canada World Youth, SayXchange, America Solidaria, and Reach Out to Asia are organisations that have all implemented South to South models of international volunteering. Some, such as SayXchange and America Solidaria, focus specifically on regional volunteering programmes that are aimed at regional understanding, regional identity formation and peace building, as well as fostering initiatives to address regionally specific development challenges.

South to South models explicitly challenge traditional and narrow views of development, since they acknowledge the wealth of skills and capacity that are available within developing countries to address their own development issues. According to Fullbrook (2007) such models 'showcase' the skills and capacity of those in the South and in doing so, challenge dominant conceptions of development. FK Norway (2009) describes their rationale for investing in the development of a South to South volunteering model thus: "South-to-south exchange is on side with the world of the future: a more self-conscious, educated and powerful South, which does not accept traditional dominance and conditions, imposed by the North."

In addition to the above, South to South models of volunteering, when regionally focused, have immense potential to contribute to the development of regional identity, promote a sense of shared understanding of development challenges, create greater understanding of the "other" (Lough & Mati, 2012), and foster an awareness of potential future cooperation between people and organisations from different countries. A study on the impact of the CWY Youth Leaders in Action's South to South programme and the SayXchange regional volunteering programme notes how both programmes contributed to increased friendship and interaction between people across borders (Mati, 2012). As Mati notes, "this demonstrates the potency of contacts to create a shared identity through such friendships" (2012: 12). While these outcomes are not significantly different to North to South volunteering, of significance is that such exchanges do not often occur or are not formally supported in regional contexts in the South. Fostering such outcomes may offer future opportunities for regional integration and solidarity, as well as organisational collaboration.

An interesting feature of some of these programmes has been the involvement of Northern countries in the establishment of such programmes. FK Norway, CWY Youth Leaders in Action and VSO South to South volunteering are all programmes that have been stimulated by interventions from Northern based organisations. These organisations, as learning organisations, assessed their programmes in developing countries and became aware of the need to use their programme expertise to contribute to challenging dominant power relations and invest in local and regional capital. While these programmes are specifically implemented by local organisations, they were established by organisations from the North. SayXchange, which is funded by the Southern Africa Trust, drew its programme model and expertise from Canada World Youth and AFS Intercultural – a Canadian and an American-based volunteer-involving organisation that operates worldwide. Canada World Youth also has partnerships with organisations in Tanzania and Kenya. The African partner organisations have drawn on this Northern experience of international volunteering programme design and implementation on the basis of the trust developed over a number of years between the organisations concerned. This demonstrates that there is potential for organisations based in the North to invest in South to South models of volunteering, and for reciprocal learning to occur between programme partners.

An advantage of involving volunteers originally from the South in volunteer opportunities in the South is that culturally, and language-wise, they will be able to establish themselves with little formal support. They have greater understanding of the local context.

Interview with American
International Health Alliance

However, this needs to go hand in hand with ensuring that local organisations are empowered to implement programmes independently over time, and that the programmes are adapted to ensure that they are accessible to the youth being targeted in the African countries or other Southern countries. The SayXchange assessment (Mati, 2012), for example, highlights several areas that need to be addressed in order to maximise the benefits of these programmes. In particular, some impoverished youth in the African countries concerned shy away from international volunteering opportunities in the region because they may not have the school leaving qualifications or legal documents required for applications, and lack the resources to cover the costs of obtaining visas. The programmes also take for granted that young people have access to information about the volunteer opportunities, but severely marginalised youth have little access to the internet, where many of these opportunities are listed. In very poor communities there are also competing priorities in that some youth choose to engage in many other things such as work, education, entertainment, sports, home chores, and thus do not have time for exchange programmes. Finally, partner organisations in host countries felt that in some cases the young volunteers were lacking in sufficient life experience to be useful in their organisations. These resourcing and structural constraints need to be addressed in the programme design if the reach of these volunteer opportunities is to be widened.

7.2 New types of volunteers

As has been discussed above, most international volunteer programmes involve skilled or professional adult volunteers or young people who volunteer prior to establishing a significant or professional skills set. Very few organisations target other groups of volunteers. However, this seems to be changing, with volunteer opportunities being opened to a wider range of individuals. Of the organisations we reviewed, one targets retired professionals and three recruit families to volunteer together. Two also recruit groups of colleagues and market their volunteer programmes as opportunities for team building.

However, very few organisations focus explicitly on recruiting traditionally marginalised groups. Three exceptions emerged. The first is AIHA (discussed earlier and in Appendix C), which established a specific programme to target Ethiopian diaspora communities to recruit volunteers to serve in their country of origin. Diaspora communities in their country of residence can often be marginalised due to visa constraints as well as discriminatory attitudes held by citizens of their new country. In response, members of a diaspora may establish strong intra-group bonds, preferring to meet together rather than integrating into their local communities. While offering international volunteer opportunities to volunteer back in their country of origin does not help to address difficulties of integration in their new countries, it does mean that civic engagement opportunities are made available to people in the diaspora. In addition, in the case of AIHA, focusing on diaspora communities demonstrates recognition on the part of the United States government (which funds the programme) that communities and professionals in the United States can learn from the experience of diaspora communities upon their return. However, no evidence was provided in this regard. Given the numbers of professionals that leave parts of the developing world to seek opportunities elsewhere, there are many opportunities to recruit members of diaspora communities to volunteer back in their home country. This may add enormous value to host communities in the South. Targeting diaspora communities offers opportunities to reverse “brain-drain”, thereby helping to deal with many of the capacity and skills constraints faced in developing countries. It also demonstrates that such skills and capacity are not solely available from Northern counterparts, but are available among

Box 9: International corporate social responsibility to address capacity shortage: A&O

Allen & Overy (A&O) law firm is an international firm with headquarters in London. The law firm has created a culture of collaboration of its employees all over the world and they encourage and expect an innovative and independent line of thought from their lawyers. The Pro bono and Community affairs programme focuses on access to justice and education. In 2010, the Pro Bono and Community Affairs programme conducted 60,000 hours of pro bono and volunteer work around the most important areas for A&O in its business: access to justice, access to education and employment and helping local communities.

In line with the access to justice focus of their corporate responsibility work and based on the experiences of two young A&O lawyers who visited Rwanda in 2009, A&O commenced a project aimed at assisting to rebuild Rwanda's legal framework. The programme connects A&O employees with organisations in Rwanda to ensure the rebuilding of capacity in the legal sector.

After the genocide, Rwanda was left with just eight lawyers, its courts were destroyed or abandoned, and the rule of law was almost non-existent. A&O positioned itself to support the government of Rwanda in strengthening a legal infrastructure. A&O collaborated with the government and other institutions in Rwanda's legal system in the transition process of the civil system toward a common law system, focusing on the training of lawyers and judges within the area of international commercial law. By 2011, there were already more than 600 lawyers and, although there were still very significant gaps in the legal infrastructure, a huge amount of effort and progress was made in terms of criminal law and human rights. The commercial law sector; so vital for Rwanda's hopes of attracting foreign investment; was identified as an area for improvement. A&O made a contribution by providing the legal expertise in commercial law.

A&O's volunteer programme supported the rebuilding of Rwanda's legal system. Feedback from those who have been part of the volunteer programme revealed that they learnt from exposure to the difficulties inherent to international and intercultural work, improving communication and managerial skills, broadening their knowledge of a different legal system and administration, and from the challenge of working with limited resources. The role and presence of legal professionals was vital to provide the legal structure necessary to contribute to Rwanda's development efforts.

their compatriots and within their own communities. As discussed above, AVI also targets traditionally marginalised groups.

Another example of targeting such groups emerges from the SayXchange programme. While most international volunteering programmes tend to be available to middle class or wealthier young people, SayXchange has explicitly focused on young people who would normally not be able to access such an opportunity and who may never travel much beyond their own community, let alone to another country. The focus on poor young people emerged in light of the fact that the xenophobic attacks experienced in South Africa in 2008, were thought to have been instigated by disaffected and frustrated young South Africans. SayXchange developed their programme in order to demonstrate that poor young people have the potential to be leaders, and to offer opportunities to broaden the experience of this group of

young people through volunteering (Southern Africa Trust & AFS Intercultural, undated). As discussed above, the programme has thus far demonstrated impact in terms of developing volunteer self-esteem and confidence, developing friendships across borders, and promoting intercultural understanding (Mati, 2012). However, the programme also needs adaptation if it is to become more widely accessible to youth in poor communities.

While the two examples mentioned above are innovative, there may also be opportunities for international volunteering organisations to involve non-traditional groups of volunteers to a much greater extent. These include people with disabilities or chronic illness, marginalised women, and retirees.

7.3 Engaging corporate stakeholders

A major area of opportunity for international volunteering programmes, and one in which certain organisations are demonstrating innovation, is in engaging corporate stakeholders in international volunteering opportunities. Companies are increasingly aware of the need to engage in corporate social responsibility activities. Lindgreen & Swaen (2010) argue that organisations increasingly consider good business practice as defining their role in society in relation to ethical conduct, investment in development and social commitment. In light of this, there has been a rapid increase in investments in corporate social responsibility. Not only is this seen as a social imperative, but it is increasingly viewed as a good business strategy; companies seen to be doing good are regarded as delivering shared value, are able to increase their brand awareness and secure a social licence to do business (Porter & Kramer, 2006). There are of course many critiques of corporate social responsibility programmes and approaches, but it is beyond the scope of this research to explore this area.

One corporate social investment strategy has been to engage employees in international volunteering programmes. This has immense advantages for companies in that they benefit from the brand awareness mentioned above, but also ensure that their employees gain invaluable international experience and know-how. Corporate international volunteering can occur in two main ways. The first is when the company itself sets up a corporate or employee international volunteering programme. One of the largest examples of this model is Pfizer's Global Health Fellows Program in which employees of Pfizer are deployed to developing countries in which they "develop the capacity of local health organisations" (Vian et al., 2007: 6). An additional benefit of the programme for Pfizer is the professional growth of employees who gain experience of working in a multi-cultural and low resource environment.

One of the difficulties associated with companies initiating and running international volunteering programmes is that they are not always as exposed to the development debates which are familiar to and engaged with by not-for-profit organisations that locate themselves within this sector. A potential risk of companies independently running international volunteering programmes is that they may reinforce the power imbalances that tended to characterise development work in the past. It must be noted, however, that in certain contexts capacity gaps and skills shortages are very real, and that companies may have the know-how and experience to contribute to filling these gaps. This was the case with Allen & Overy (A&O), an international law firm, which has a strong focus on pro-bono work that deals with access to justice and education. In 2009 it began Project Rwanda which was aimed at addressing the very real skills shortages that the Rwandan justice system faces (see box 9 above).

The fact that A&O chose to work with the Rwandan justice system and focused on the priority areas that Rwanda had identified demonstrates a partnership model that addresses capacity gaps without approaching the relationship in a paternalistic fashion.

The second model by which corporate international volunteering may take place is through established international volunteering organisations, which then partner with companies to implement a corporate international volunteering programme. The benefits of such a partnership are that established international volunteering organisations, which are often already located in the development space, think critically about the role of people from the North volunteering in the South. Furthermore, they have established relationships with partner organisations in which corporate volunteers may be placed, and they can ensure sufficient orientation aimed at preparing volunteers for development education and intercultural learning. EIL Ireland has established a corporate international volunteering programme which targets corporate entities in Ireland and offers them opportunities for their employees to engage in a period of voluntary service. According to EIL, benefits to the corporate organisation may include employees gaining experience of working in different cultural and resource settings, as well as greater cultural awareness amongst employees who learn from the experiences, either informally or formally, of returned volunteers. To date EIL has placed two volunteers recruited through corporate entities. The volunteers are required to undergo the same orientation programmes as other volunteers in order to prepare them for the development education and intercultural learning expectations.

Despite the potential that lies in corporate international volunteering, EIL notes that they have struggled to recruit volunteers in this way and to establish stable partnerships with private companies. This is perceived to be in part due to the difficult economic climate in Ireland, and in many other parts of the world, which limits the possibilities for companies to invest in programmes that fall outside of their core business. Nevertheless, EIL is hopeful that there will be development in this area in the future.

There is a great deal of opportunity in leveraging the impetus for corporate social responsibility investments to engage employees in international volunteering activities. However, one needs to consider such potential with a critical lens. For instance, leveraging corporate social responsibility interest needs to be done in ways that ensure the paternalistic perspectives of the past are not reinforced. Most companies are not involved in development debates, nor do they often reflect on their impact on local communities. As such there are risks in relation to private companies engaging in development activities. Furthermore, companies are primarily interested in profit making, not in engaging in development activities. International volunteer programmes may thus be compromised by the emphasis on what the company, and perhaps the employee, gains from the engagement rather than what the host organisation and community can gain. Promoting development education amongst corporate stakeholders interested in such programmes thus becomes a priority. Further research is needed to understand the impacts of corporate international volunteering and the potential to engage employees located in the South in international volunteering opportunities.

7.4 Online volunteering

With the massive reliance on information and communication technology in this global era, it is surprising that more organisations do not have opportunities for online volunteering such as United Nations Volunteers and Bankers Without Borders. Of the organisations included in our study only two have online volunteering programmes. United Nations

Volunteers runs an online volunteering programme, which enables would-be volunteers to advertise their skills and capacity, and for organisations in need of assistance to identify such volunteers and connect with them for assistance that can be offered remotely. This type of volunteering thus occurs on an ad hoc basis as and when volunteers and organisations are able to match need with capacity. The model allows for a great deal of flexibility, but largely relies on the skill and competence of the volunteer and the management of the organisation.

Bankers without Borders is a programme of the Grameen Foundation (discussed earlier and in Appendix D), which pairs professionals in the financial sector with organisations focusing on financial inclusion and micro-lending. The experience of Bankers without Borders demonstrates the immense potential of online volunteering. It enables organisations to connect with a wide range of volunteers from all over the world. It offers flexibility to engage volunteers who may not have the means to travel to an on-site location to volunteer, and it allows organisations to connect with a wide range of partner organisations that require volunteers, also located in various countries. Training, support to volunteers, and post-placement engagement are programme features that are also well facilitated by online connections that provide training by Skype, webinars and give volunteers access to web-based information and learning material. The Bankers without Borders initiative is currently in a significant growth phase. They are engaging a much wider range of professionals as they realise the demand from organisations for a wider range of professional skills; and as such are considering changing their name to reflect their reach beyond the micro-finance sector. Provided such online programmes are carefully managed they offer immense potential to leverage and connect a far wider range of volunteers with organisations seeking support.

However, there are also challenges. The Kenya Red Cross Society⁸, which includes a small online volunteering component in their volunteer mobilisation strategy, notes that they have struggled with managing volunteers effectively, as well as ensuring that sensitive documentation (such as legal documents where assistance from legal professionals is sought) are handled with the necessary trust and care. Many online volunteering opportunities rely on the goodwill of the volunteer and the organisation, with the organisation being limited by distance in their ability to effectively manage volunteers. These may be some challenges, but as the Bankers without Borders experience demonstrates, there is enormous potential when programmes are well managed, and volunteers are well trained. Areas for further development include undertaking rigorous assessments of the impacts of online volunteering, and setting quality standards for engagement between online volunteers and the organisations and communities they support.

8 These conversations were conducted during a meeting on Volunteering in Africa, hosted by the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) and the Swedish Red Cross (SRC) in 2012

8. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study shows that there is enormous diversity in the way in which international volunteering is practised. While the traditional model of sending mainly professionals and young people as volunteers from developed countries to serve in developing countries is still dominant, there is increasing innovation in international volunteering models. Changes in how international volunteering is structured have largely been stimulated by reflection on how international volunteering is linked with development and how it serves to reinforce or challenge traditional notions and relationships between North and South. Equally important is the extent to which international volunteering can leverage change in this regard. Certain organisations have demonstrated good practice in developing themselves as learning organisations that have forged the path for more progressive ways of engaging with developing country partners and ensuring that international volunteering models promote empowerment and social justice, and recognise the capacity of local people. This may explain in part the growing interest in promoting South to South volunteering exchanges, harnessing the power of skills and capacity located in developing countries, and involving marginalised groups in volunteering opportunities.

Good practice in international volunteering largely stems from the values that organisations promote. This study has revealed key aspects of good practice, which include promoting learning, both by the volunteer and the organisational stakeholders; investing in opportunities for reflection; promoting the building of social capital and equal partnership; and working towards long-term sustainable engagement and outcomes. The study highlights the many ways in which organisations are invested in these values and how these are practiced in different ways.

The study also demonstrates the immense potential for innovation in international volunteering. Harnessing the resources of corporate stakeholders, and leveraging information and communication technology emerge as two major areas for further research and evaluation. So too is the increasing interest that is evident in South to South and regional volunteering. These are perhaps the areas that currently demonstrate the greatest interest in terms of the future of international volunteering, which, when combined with the values discussed above, may open doors for a wider range of people to engage in the pursuit of active citizenship (global, regional and national), social justice and equity. However, continued research is needed to understand how these opportunities unfold and what impact they will have both on development and on how international volunteering is practiced. Alongside these relatively new areas of development, continued good practice in the areas of development education, intercultural learning and development interventions by volunteers, as well as instilling practices of equal partnerships and continued organisational learning, offer potential to strengthen current programmes and ensure that the impacts are mutually beneficial to all parties involved.

A number of key recommendations arise from the research, each of which pertain to different stakeholders.

Recommendations for volunteer sending agencies (VSAs)

VSAs must place development at the centre of programme design and see it as the starting point for their organisational rationale. Development should be conceptualised in line with the discourse reflected in the Busan declaration and post-2015 discussions. Sending organisations should engage with Southern perspectives on how development objectives should be achieved. The following practical implications flow from this recommendation:

- VSAs should recognise development disparities and acknowledge Southern voices on development. They should also increase their knowledge about the root causes of key development challenges.
- Host organisations located in Southern countries should give substantive input into programme design and implementation and, importantly, guide the objectives of international volunteer programmes that affect them.
- The development impact of international volunteer programmes must be regarded as a key objective against which to evaluate programme performance. This means assessing impact in relation to volunteers as well as host organisations.

Partnerships reflect how organisations give expression to values such as social justice and human rights. VSAs should ensure that partnerships with host organisations are formed on an equal footing and that host organisations are involved in volunteer recruitment, orientation, debriefing and evaluation. Practical implications of this recommendation include:

- Ensuring that there is a systematic process of identifying and engaging host organisations. This may occur through networks or public calls for partnerships.
- Host organisations should be centrally involved in shaping programme objectives, which should be responsive to their needs and capacity.
- Programme design and implementation should be respectful of and guided by host organisations' strategic objectives.
- The practice of volunteer management should be clearly laid out and agreed upon prior to placing volunteers, and should take into account the host organisations' experience and capacity (such as staff resources and time) to manage international volunteers.
- Volunteers should be recruited and matched in close partnership with host organisations, with the aim of enabling volunteers to meet the host organisation's strategic objectives.
- Host and sending organisations should have shared responsibility for induction, training, and debriefing of volunteers.
- Consideration should be given to the need to orientate local staff and volunteers to hosting international volunteers in order to manage expectations and build productive working relationships.

International volunteering should be framed as an opportunity for reciprocal learning, both in terms of development education and intercultural learning. The focus should thus be on how the volunteer experience can improve the understanding of the international volunteer, global relationships and the root causes of persistent poverty and underdevelopment, and how host organisations can strengthen their services by involving international volunteers. This requires intentionality with regard to providing opportunities for reflection and learning

throughout the placement and on the volunteer's return. Practical implications arising from this recommendation include:

- Ensuring that host and sending organisations plan together for engagement and reciprocal learning.
- Designing programmes to ensure that orientation focuses not only on the logistics of the volunteer experience, but on orientating volunteers to development debates and issues.
- Incorporating opportunities for peer-learning and structured reflection into the placement. This might include matching international with local volunteers for the duration of the placement.
- Creating reflection opportunities as part of post-placement engagement.

Too often international volunteering is de-linked from the realities of local volunteer engagement. Rather than operating in isolation of or in competition with local volunteering, international volunteers should be encouraged to engage with local volunteers. Not only does this ensure that volunteering of all kinds is valued, but that it maximises the potential for mutual learning. There are a variety of ways in which VSAs may engage in promoting local volunteering:

- Design opportunities for international volunteers to work closely with local volunteers;
- Invest in advocacy to promote and recognise the value of local volunteering.
- Invest in the promotion of South-South or South-North volunteering programmes.

VSAs need to engage a wider diversity of volunteers. Not only would this ensure that more volunteers are available for placement; it would also expand the number of people who can gain experience of and contribute to solving development challenges. This is in line with post-2015 discussions, which seek to maximise the potential of all people to meaningfully engage in development. To do this well, VSAs need to become more aware of the stratified socio-economic context in which they are operating, and that challenges of inequality and disadvantage are present in Northern as well as Southern countries. Practical implications of this recommendation include:

- Understanding issues of inequality, discrimination and poverty that face all countries, and becoming aware of which groups are excluded and marginalised within particular localities.
- Being aware that current programme designs are unlikely to meet the needs of all volunteers and considering how programmes could be changed to meet the needs of volunteers drawn from a wider range of socio-economic contexts.
- Designing recruitment techniques that are likely to reach out and connect with specific marginalised groups, and ensuring that programmes engage with the barriers to participation (such as a lack of financial resources, family commitments, lack of travel documents) that such groups may face.
- Managing additional needs that may arise during and post the volunteer placement.

Recommendations for international volunteer sending and funding organisations

There is a need to invest in the promotion of South-South, South-North and regional volunteer programmes to ensure that Southern capacity is recognised, maximised and shared, and to promote reciprocal learning. The experience of VSAs is vital, but this does not mean that programmes that work in the North can be imported to the South. Adaptations are required to account for the socio-economic realities that many potential volunteers face, as well as the regional travel barriers that might constrain freedom of movement. The promotion of such programmes will depend on forging effective regional partnerships and securing the required funding.

With regard to corporate volunteering, the following recommendations arise:

Private sector stakeholders are increasingly playing a direct role in the formal development space. The growing emphasis on corporate social responsibility means that companies are likely to continue playing a role in international development, often through international volunteering. Volunteer sending agencies can potentially engage meaningfully with these new actors in development by engaging them in a discussion on best practice in international volunteering, and how they can best use their skills and expertise to contribute to international development and poverty eradication.

It is important to understand current practices of corporate international volunteering in order to identify what works, what gaps and shortfalls manifest themselves, and to build the capacity of companies to better engage communities through reciprocal learning. More research on corporate international volunteering is thus required.

With regard to online volunteering, there is a need to understand the different models in use and evaluate their activities to determine good practice in this emerging field.

Investments in further research will help to better understand and critically reflect on the contribution and impact of international volunteering on development, and ways in which good practice can be strengthened. Key areas of potential further research include the impact of volunteering on host communities, corporate volunteering, online volunteering, reciprocal, regional and South-South volunteering.

Recommendations to Comhlámh

The good practice recommendations pertaining to VSAs discussed above could be incorporated into the Comhlámh Code of Good Practice. In particular, the central relevance of development in programme design, and the integral involvement of host organisations in programme design and implementation, needs to be more visible in order to demonstrate equity in the partnership and shape good practice in terms that work for both the sending and host organisations.

Organisations that are excelling in their engagement with development issues, engaging meaningfully with host organisations, promoting learning opportunities, and encouraging local volunteering should be supported and celebrated.

Comhlámh should continue to raise awareness of new and emerging models of international volunteering practice, including corporate and online volunteering, and what might constitute best practice in these areas.

APPENDIX A:

List of organisations sampled

Adventist Development and Relief Agency	Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst(EED)/ Church Development Service
AFS Intercultural Programs-Community Service Programme	Federation of Volunteer Efforts in Korea (FOVE)
Allen & Overy Project Rwanda	Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Interazionale Volontario (FOCSIV)
America Solidaria Foundation	FK Norway (Fredskorpset)
American International Health Alliance (AIHA)	Friends of Londiani
Association Francaise des volontaires du progres (AFVP)	German-Tanzanian-partnership e.V. (DTP)
Atlas Corps	Glaxo Smith Kline Global Volunteering
Australian Volunteers International (AVI)	GLEN (Germany)
Bankers Without Borders	Hungarian Volunteer Sending Foundation (HVSF)
Camara	International Movement ATD Fourth World
Canada Executive Service Organisation (CESO-SACO)	Link Community Development
Canada World Youth Young Leaders in Action	Pfizer Global Health Fellows Programme
Center d'etude et de cooperation internationale (CECI)/World University Service of Canada (WUSC)	Reach Out to Asia
Children in Crossfire	SAGE Net
Christian Abroad	SayXchange
Cross Cultural Solutions	SERVE
CUSO-VSO	SUAS
Development Perspectives	TAERA Tanzania
E.Changer	United Nations Volunteers
EIL Intercultural Learning	VLM
	VSI
	Voluntary Service Overseas

APPENDIX B:

American Field Service

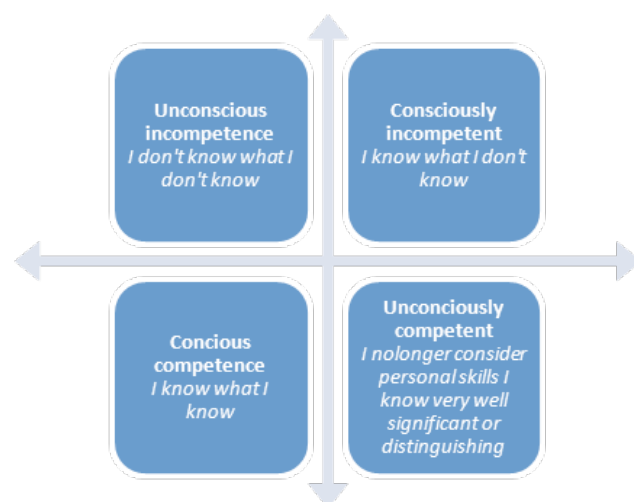
AFS Intercultural Programmes is an international, volunteer driven non-profit organisation, started in 1948, that provides intercultural, experiential and structured reflection learning opportunities through its programmes. AFS is based in New York, but operates globally with offices in all regions. The AFS community service programme, in which participant-volunteers live abroad and volunteer in an NGO is one of their most innovative programmes for young adults over the age of eighteen.

The community service programme operates in about 40 countries in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Asia Pacific, and the Middle East. The programme is designed to facilitate a process in which participant-volunteers gain practical skills and knowledge whilst volunteering in local organisations around the world. This programme mostly involves north to south and south to south movement of participant-volunteers. They respond to the needs of host organisations, which include teaching English to children, developing training programmes with human rights workers, aiding homeless children, working at orphanages and many more.

AFS is a volunteer-driven organisation, which has over 40 000 AFS-volunteers worldwide (we distinguish here between AFS-volunteers who run the actual programmes in which participant-volunteers engage in: for example, local AFS-volunteers from South Africa support foreign participant-volunteers who volunteer for a fixed period in South African NGOs). They are active at all levels of the organisation - from the board to local operations. Volunteering and supporting volunteer networks is at the core of AFS programmes. Active participation is fostered among high school graduates, students taking a gap year or any young adults who want to make a positive impact in society while learning about another culture. The AFS-volunteers programme also targets families, professionals and other stakeholders who are keen to learn and embrace change through critical thinking.

A strong learning focus

Since 1947 and throughout its history, AFS developed its educational approach with an emphasis on experiential learning methods that highlight immersive experience balanced with structured reflection. Participant-volunteers are guided to systematically reflect on their knowledge of global issues, other cultures, and their own intercultural competence in order to, ideally, move through a process from 'unconscious incompetence' to 'unconscious competence'. The diagram below reflects this process:



AFS uses guided structured reflection as a means to assist participant-volunteers to adapt and become consciously competent in a new culture. This should help participant-volunteers reach a level of unconscious competence where adaptation becomes natural and real.

AFS also prioritises inter-cultural learning (ICL) as a key goal. To achieve this, the organisation uses, among many other models and frameworks, the theoretical framework known as the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). This model is used to guide development of people's mind-set towards cultural sensitivity. The process involves understanding and appreciating cultural differences and, not in a linear fashion, though for ease of understanding as presented here, progresses from seeing one's own culture as the centre of the universe to seeing it as one of many equally important cultures around the world. This involves moving in a continuum: from denial, defence and minimisation of other people and cultures, to relative stages of acceptance (where people consciously start appreciating differences), followed by adaptation (people consider fitting into other cultures) and integration. Integration is a state of advanced adaptation where people freely move in and out of different cultures. To achieve this, AFS fosters a positive understanding of culture through intensive and experiential training.

In relation to ICL, AFS hinges its training and learning facilitation on experiential learning which focuses on reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, abstract experimentation (role plays) and learning from actual experiences. Reflection and the growth of self-awareness are some of the ways in which AFS encourages in-depth learning among skilled volunteers, and equips them to fit in with the host organisations and communities in which they serve.

Partner relations

Geographic distances make it difficult for host and sending organisations to conduct the orientation training together, and for this reason AFS stresses the importance of building good partner relations. AFS' key strategy in training participant-volunteers is to make use of AFS-volunteer networks comprised of experienced alumni, AFS-volunteer trainers and AFS employees in both the sending and host organisations. Through these networks, participant-volunteers are orientated and trained during pre-departure preparation and upon arrival in the host countries; they also receive additional training with their host families.

In both sending and receiving organisations, trainers' skills and capabilities are assessed to ensure that they are able to clearly communicate the needs of the host organisations. AFS also provides relevant training to NGOs hosting participant-volunteers on how to manage the hosted volunteers and this creates a base of skills that are used to train other hosted volunteers in the future.

Within host countries, AFS provides opportunities for participant-volunteers to observe, conceptualise and reflect on their experiences and the activities that take place around them. They also reflect on their engagement with the host NGOs and communities, and do the same on returning to their home countries.

Strong and equal partnerships

To ensure that the host and sending organisations operate optimally and gain equally from the programme, AFS ensures that both parties agree on the standards, policies and procedures of running programmes, including the ICL methodology. This process can be costly and time consuming but is necessary for building strong partnerships that can be sustained through trust, and shared understanding. AFS has a clear partnership and governance model to manage the relationship between host organisations and sending organisations run by the 40,000 AFS-volunteers. The organisation is aware that a strong partnership is important to successfully implement and run the close to 13,000 exchanges per year. AFS accepts that bridging cultural differences is an on-going challenge that needs thoughtful intervention, even in an organisation that is sixty-five years old.

APPENDIX C:

American International Health Alliance

The American International Health Alliance is a non-profit organisation based in Washington, D.C that is involved in the North-South exchange of professionals in the healthcare sector. Its HIV/AIDS Twinning Center creates partnerships between institutions in the US and developing countries focused on health systems strengthening and health professions education. The Volunteer Healthcare Corps (VHC) is a distinct but complementary component that provides structured opportunities for healthcare professionals in the United States to play an important role in global health by serving in long-term mentorships at partner institutions in select African countries. The VHC has placed volunteers in South Africa, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Botswana and is now piloting programs in Zambia and Namibia. One of their most innovative programmes is the Ethiopian Diaspora Volunteer Programme (EDVP), which mobilises Ethiopian healthcare professionals living in other countries, mainly the United States, to volunteer in their country of origin. With support from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief (PEPFAR) and the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Ethiopia, EDVP has placed 51 volunteers who have contributed over 61 years of in-kind time.

The programme emerged when AIHA proposed VHC as an innovative mechanism to assist the Ethiopian Ministry of Health in addressing the gaps and shortages in the country's health sector. By recruiting and placing Ethiopian Diaspora, the programme is specifically designed to reverse the 'brain drain' that many parts of Africa are experiencing and involve top quality Ethiopian professionals in the country's key health challenges.

AIHA has found that their Diaspora volunteers have a strong motivation to contribute to their home country. While the majority of participants have been Ethiopian Americans, the programme has also included members from Ethiopian Diaspora communities in Australia, France and United Kingdom. Many Ethiopian Diaspora recognise their ability and responsibility to apply their skills and experience acquired in the country of residence towards improving healthcare in Ethiopia; In addition, many members of the Diaspora community maintain strong family and community ties in Ethiopia, which also influences their drive to serve in their home country for a period of time.

Recruitment and placement

Volunteers are recruited via the networks that AIHA has established with Ethiopian Diaspora communities in the United States, particularly those that have organised around their involvement in the healthcare sector. In addition to this targeted approach to recruitment, as the programme becomes better known in the community, volunteers have approached AIHA to seek placement opportunities.

AIHA adopts a flexible approach to the programme in terms of the duration of the service period, the start dates, and the placement of volunteers, because of the relatively small numbers

of volunteers that are involved in the programme thus far. This flexibility has contributed to the success of the program in attracting highly skilled volunteers, who are able to negotiate the time off or step away from their US-based jobs to facilitate the volunteer placement. The average length of a placement in Ethiopia was 12.5 months.

The placement sites include various healthcare organisations throughout Ethiopia and also in Addis Ababa. These organisations are usually identified by the Ethiopian government, but in certain cases volunteers may request a particular organization that is of interest to them. The volunteers work closely with local staff focusing on skills transfer to their counterparts and sustainable institutional capacity building. This ensures that once the volunteer leaves, the capacity gap is reduced. Volunteers are encouraged to arrange and facilitate appropriate training programmes and workshops for staff at their placement site and also to attend conferences or other training opportunities for professional development.

Orientation and support

AIHA finds that the experience of orientating diaspora volunteers to the placement country is somewhat different to orientating other international volunteers to host countries. Diaspora volunteers can more rapidly integrate and establish themselves in the community, given their familiarity with the culture and language. Therefore, the orientation for diaspora volunteers is focused on acclimating volunteers to Ethiopia in a professional setting.

On arrival, volunteers are introduced to the host organisation and staff and are provided with a briefing about how to enter the organisation. It is a possibility that some volunteers might feel frustrated at the challenges in the healthcare system in Ethiopia after working abroad. AIHA briefs volunteers on how to work at their organisation with humility, establishing themselves as part of a team and navigating professional relationships to ensure a successful transition and placement. Many local Ethiopians may have preconceived ideas about returning Ethiopians, particularly in relation to the reasons why they left the country, and what they bring on their return to the country. AIHA prepares volunteers for reactions such as these.

To provide substantial support to its partnerships and volunteers, AIHA has a regional office in Addis Ababa with a VHC Coordinator focused on working with the volunteers and their placement sites. Additionally, AIHA offers financial support and basic benefits to volunteers so they may be afforded the opportunity to serve as volunteers internationally without having to incur exorbitant out-of-pocket expenses. AIHA covers all travel related costs that includes flights to and from Ethiopia as well as travel insurance, medical evacuation and necessary permits, visas and immunisations. Ethiopian volunteers are also provided with a monthly living and housing stipend; most Diaspora volunteers often have their own accommodations through family.

Impact

The strength of the Ethiopian Diaspora Volunteer Program is the capability of highly qualified health and allied health professionals to build local capacity through skills and knowledge transfer. The placement sites, the Ethiopian Ministry of Health and CDC/Ethiopia have expressed the value added to the healthcare sector by the EDVP volunteers. Acknowledging the success of the Diaspora programme, the Ethiopian Ministry of Health approached AIHA to help recruit and place cohorts of medical instructors to teach and advise at the 13 recently

launched medical schools throughout the country. Given that a significant proportion of Ethiopia's doctors and health professionals are out of the country, this is a substantial effort to reverse and reduce the brain drain that the country is experiencing.

AIHA evaluates its programme based on feedback from the volunteers as well as the host organisations. AIHA reports that a handful of their volunteers have taken on a second volunteer placement, chosen to repatriate in Ethiopia, and/or have moved into senior positions in the health sector. Requests for additional volunteers from host organisations are also viewed as a sign of programme success and impact. Through its sustained funding, the US government also recognises the success and importance of the programme, both for the contribution that volunteers make to the Ethiopian health sector as well as with the cultural and professional experience volunteers carry with them upon returning to the US or continuing their professional trajectory.

One area where AIHA sees potential for future investment is in post-service debriefings and strengthening relationships with alumni volunteers. AIHA is working on developing an established network to connect returned volunteers with opportunities to continue their involvement in Ethiopian health issues from afar.

APPENDIX D:

Bankers without Borders

The Grameen Foundation's volunteer programme, Bankers without Borders (BwB), located in Washington, was launched in 2008 with support from J.P. Morgan and the MasterCard Foundation amongst other corporate organisations. Today, BwB is operational in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, North America, Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, in partnership with Grameen-Jameel Microfinance Ltd. The programme's ability to effectively leverage technology to deliver well-managed and responsive volunteering interventions with skilled professionals makes it one of the most exciting developments in the international volunteering space.

Requests to volunteer with the Foundation spiked after Grameen Bank and Professor Muhammad Yunus were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. While the Foundation had always engaged volunteers in its offices, the heightened interest in its work presented an opportunity to harness volunteering as a development resource for its client organisations. BwB was thus created to strategically deploy the intellectual capital of private sector professionals to enhance the impact, scale and sustainability of micro-finance institutions (MFIs), technology for development (T4D) initiatives and social enterprises fighting poverty. The establishment of BwB allows the Foundation to provide a wider array of support mechanisms to its clients, ranging from access to capital and technology to human talent and ingenuity.

In all of its projects, BwB endeavours to ensure that volunteer time and skills are leveraged in the most efficient ways in order to maximise the volunteer experience and the benefit for the organisations they serve. Approximately half of the volunteering done through BwB happens remotely (online), thanks to communications technology. This is also often necessary given resource considerations and the fact that many volunteers are not able to leave their jobs or homes to volunteer on site for long periods of time. That said, about a quarter of BwB volunteering projects require on-site support, while a further quarter of projects involve a combination of virtual and on-site volunteering.

Research conducted thus far finds that there is no significant difference in client satisfaction depending on whether the volunteer support is done remotely, on-site, or a combination of both. This points to BwB's success to date in utilising technology to implement effective volunteering projects, but also to the potential for other international volunteering programmes to embrace technology to deliver cost-effective and impactful programmes.

Focus on client needs

BwB strives to be responsive to the needs of its client organisations. One mechanism for achieving this is crowd-sourcing - the process of leveraging a large group of people to take

action on a project which allows BwB to meet the needs of client organisations in a timely fashion. This strategy underpins BwB's ever growing international reserve of volunteers which reached 14,000 in March 2013.

BwB invests significant time in identifying MFIs, T4Ds and social enterprises that have demonstrated their potential to grow and in having frank discussions with them about BwB's ability to meet their organisational needs (oftentimes remotely), importantly, client organisations are involved in the selection of suitable volunteers for their organisations. Client organisations share in covering the cost to implement and manage the volunteering project. This approach lessens BwB's dependency on donor funding and ensures that there is shared ownership.

BwB volunteers are either salaried employees, retired or semi-retired professionals, or are graduate students or professors. Approximately 40% of BwB volunteers are from the financial sector, but BwB is increasingly looking to involve individuals with wider skill sets (e.g. communications, human resources and technology). Many of BwB's client organisations experience general challenges with organisational development in addition to challenges with financial management.

In the past four years, BwB volunteers have supported more than 80 organisations in 20 countries. Given BwB's approach of matching talent in its vast network of volunteers with the needs of organisations, volunteers originate from both developed and developing countries and serve in both developed and developing contexts. This is unique in the field of international volunteering, where programmes often draw on volunteers from developed countries to serve in developing countries.

Not all registered volunteers are deployed. The supply of volunteers still outpaces the demand for volunteers. As a result, BwB has developed a number of strategies for engaging registered volunteers online to maintain their volunteer status with BwB. This includes providing registered volunteers access to online education materials on microfinance and social enterprise, engaging volunteers in visioning sessions with client organisations using Google hangouts, involving volunteers in mapping exercises and campaigns, and facilitating volunteers to fundraise, among others. This allows BwB to maintain its vast network of registered volunteers, which is crucial to its ability to be responsive to client organisations.

Using technology to facilitate volunteer management

Volunteer management at BwB is prioritised throughout all stages of the project cycle. Shannon Maynard, Director of BwB, calls this "end to end" volunteer management.

BwB developed an online platform called SkillanthropyTM, to facilitate the volunteer management cycle. Through this platform, new clients and partner organisations can learn about BwB's work and their approach to collaboration by launching online interactive orientation trainings. The training includes an introductory overview of BwB including their history and success, an overview of the typical BwB project, its scope of work and intended results. A major aspect of the training focuses on practical skills on a project life cycle.

The online tools also enable BwB volunteers to access orientation materials, project briefings and to participate in training on specific project-related issues when necessary.

To further support volunteers BwB uses a mentoring matching process through which volunteers who have been in the country or have volunteered for the same organisation are linked and encouraged to share their experience and best practices with the new volunteer.

BwB's online platform is also used to host webinar series that feature in-depth lectures and presentations conducted by guest lecturers on discreet topics of interest in the micro-finance and T4D sectors. In addition, there is an e-learning community and an online library where volunteers can access information. This approach helps to ensure that active (as well as registered) volunteers are exposed to the latest research, trends, and topics in the field of social entrepreneurship, micro-finance and T4D.

A project manager monitors each volunteer project. This support, in addition to the online materials, is critical to ensuring positive and productive relationships between the volunteers and the client organisations. This is especially important for managing some recurring challenges which BwB have encountered. There is a risk that some client organisations may view volunteers as a burden rather than a resource and treat them as substitutes for paid positions rather than a leveraged resource.

To help generate shared and realistic expectations among volunteers and client organisations, a logic model approach is used, which allows stakeholders to visualise and document the intended outcomes of the project.

BwB has also made significant investments into evaluating its programme to assist with programme development and quality. BwB measures volunteer impact using a series of indicators which include:

- the economic value of in-kind services donated
- the completion of all volunteer deliverables
- volunteer and project manager satisfaction
- longer-term tracking of the cost-savings and economic value of volunteer projects

BwB's online platform is used to assist its evaluation efforts, by tracking volunteer hours and conducting online evaluations. Complementing this, volunteers present written reports and oral presentations of their time and activities in projects, which help to ensure accountability for agreed-upon deliverables. Exit interviews with both volunteers and client organisations are also conducted to gain insights on how to improve the experience for both parties in the future.

In addition to its on-going evaluation efforts, BwB has commissioned an impact assessment of its work which looks at the longer-term impact on volunteers as well as the client organisations, with findings expected to be released by the second quarter of 2013.

APPENDIX E:

Canada World Youth

Canada World Youth (CWY) is a non-profit organisation that develops and implements international educational programmes for young people aged 15 to 35. CWY has carried out youth-focused programmes with community and institutional partners in more than sixty countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe.

CWY programmes are built on the belief that young people have a vital role to play in development and in building a more just and sustainable world community; consequently, their programs and activities promote youth-centered development where systemic barriers are acknowledged and opportunities for real participation are created. Through programming developed with their overseas partners, it is possible for young women and men to see not only how youth are affected by development but also how they can take part in it.

CWY programmes are designed on the principle of reciprocal exchange and learning, whether they involve volunteers from the global North travelling to countries in the global South and vice versa, or south to south and regional volunteer programmes. As outlined below, one of the most unique aspects of the CWY model is to pair volunteers from the different countries and for them to serve together in both countries. This approach facilitates honest dialogue between partners in the South and in the North and provides volunteers with a real experience and new perspective on how people live and address development issues in different countries. All CWY projects are supervised by highly qualified professionals who provide volunteers with a safe, unique, and enriching experience underpinned with active learning.

Learning by doing

CWY has a bilateral core programme that advocates 'learning by doing'. In this model young volunteers learn by getting actively involved in community initiatives in Canada and in other countries, as well as through regional partnerships. Integral to all CWY programmes is a learning philosophy that is based on 'four pillars': learning to be, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to live together effectively. The exchange programme has learning objectives and outcomes in each of these domains to promote emotive, cognitive, and behavioural development. Emotive learning benefits are realised through changes in values and attitudes that volunteers build through interpersonal relationships. The cognitive impacts of the learning approaches are recognised through the knowledge and skills (communication, organisational and technical) volunteers develop. The behavioural benefits are realised through more defined career and study choices volunteers make and their active engagement in local and global civic and community issues. In many cases the experience is transformational, affecting volunteers' core values and attitudes, encouraging volunteers to understand their capacities, influencing choices for future work and studies, and encouraging social involvement.

CWY is one of the few organisations in the world that offers a two-part programme, with one phase in Canada and a second phase in another country. The projects are designed to enable young people to enjoy a short, intense learning experience that combines life with a host family and volunteer work in an exchange country. This unique approach to volunteer programming provides an entry point for youth to actively learn about and contribute to development initiatives at the community level and fosters dialogue between partners in the global South and the global North.

For instance in the Youth Leaders in Action Programme, volunteers spend three months in Canada and three months overseas; alternatively a team of nine young Canadians and nine young people from a partner country spend six months together doing volunteer work. Essentially, each young Canadian is matched with a participant from the exchange country for the entire period. In addition to working side-by-side to contribute to positive change in communities, together, young people gain a better understanding of their own country, have the opportunity to put their experiences in both regions in better perspective and learn how other young people perceive their own country. The programme also accrues academic benefits as volunteers can earn credits for their participation.

Shared learning

To ensure that shared learning occurs among the young volunteers, alumni, and development sector specialists, CWY hosted its first international learning forum in 2010, referred to as 'Youth Partnerships in Action' as part of its Youth Leaders in Action (YLA) programme. International and Canadian partners, from 15 countries (Benin, Bolivia, Canada, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, South Africa, Tanzania, Ukraine, and Vietnam), were provided with the opportunity to interact and share their experience.

Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the YLA programme has five different components: Youth Exchanges; Inter-Institutional Capacity Building; Sector Projects; the Youth Leadership Initiative (which involves providing seed grants to youth-led initiatives); and the Learning Forum. The YLA programme focuses on three key sectors, health, environment and gender, and aims to contribute to the realisation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The forum created a space in which diverse voices were heard, ideas were explored, collective learning took place, strategic linkages were formed, primarily between exchange-countries and Canadian partners, and participants were able to familiarise themselves with the various sectors, contexts, success stories, and challenges of the YLA programme. It was a unique opportunity for face-to-face interaction with all key stakeholders in CWY's volunteer programme.

APPENDIX F:

Experiments in International Living (EIL) Ireland

Experiments in International Living (EIL) Ireland, is an Irish not-for-profit organisation, which runs short-term international volunteering programmes involving approximately 1,500 participants (including 120 to 150 international volunteers from different countries outside Ireland) each year, primarily young people. The programmes offer the volunteers opportunities for immersion, in a culture other than their own and aims to promote intercultural understanding and development education. EIL's use of experiential learning in their design of volunteer programmes is also meant to challenge individuals to be more globally aware and to become responsible, active citizens. EIL sees itself as a programme that "inspires global citizenship" through short-term immersion aimed at stimulating a lifetime of engagement in global issues.

A short-term programme with long-term aims

The volunteer programme runs for between three weeks to one year depending on the availability of the volunteers (some volunteers, particularly those who are employed, volunteer during their work holidays). On average the duration of placements is 6.5 weeks. Regardless of the volunteer duration, the programme is designed so as to provide volunteers with an opportunity to witness the realities of global inequality and to work with local partners. This in turn is intended to be a catalyst for future engagement in development issues. EIL views development education and intercultural learning as a long-term process. However, the opportunity to be confronted by other cultures and assist with development projects in the short term can ensure that individuals have a life changing experience, which stimulates a longer-term commitment to issues of equality, justice and development. EIL's approach is thus to generate awareness in order to empower returned volunteers to act as global awareness multipliers in their community and among their peers and also to take action on global justice issues. In this way the programme's impact is intended to be long term and does not cease with the end of the service period. However, the volunteers are not viewed as development actors and EIL does not position itself as a development agency. Rather EIL primarily facilitates learning about global issues and the volunteer placement is part of a longer-term learning process of active citizenship in an interdependent world.

Orientation and in-service learning

The learning process begins with selection of potential volunteers. For some of their short-term volunteering programmes such as the Global Awareness programme, volunteers are selected based on their commitment to longer-term engagement in development issues. In order to be selected for participation, potential volunteers have to indicate what activities they will undertake upon their return, and how these will contribute to raising awareness about, and engaging with development challenges in countries in the global South. EIL also targets motivated and enthusiastic people who are keen to volunteer abroad and yet do not necessarily have specific commitment to longer-term engagement. By using this approach, EIL's goal is to educate, empower and support volunteers so that they follow up their engagement on return and subsequently encourage them to generate awareness about global issues.

Once selected, volunteers are provided with different options to participate in intensive training of either one, two or five days, depending on their availability or the project they would be placed with. The training is aimed at sensitising volunteers on global development issues. In the future, EIL plans that every volunteer will undertake the two-day workshop. For certain programmes, there is additional training in place that is aimed at up-skilling volunteers, for example volunteers are trained in specific issues such as media, campaigning and HIV/AIDS.

EIL views development in terms of equality, inclusiveness and sustainability. The orientation programme is participatory and engages volunteers to develop their own ideas on development and global challenges. The orientation also makes use of peer education by past volunteers. The orientation continues for up to five days upon arrival of volunteers in their host country, where they are provided with information on in-country, social and development issues.

EIL believes successful international volunteer programmes require capable and dedicated staff in the host countries as well as in Ireland. Staff members are highly qualified professionals who are experienced in intercultural exchanges and are able to support international volunteers. Staff members are drawn from the region in which the programmes operate and have a deep knowledge and understanding of the local communities and their needs. This helps to ensure that international volunteers engage in activities that are relevant to community needs and that relationships between volunteers and members of host organisations and communities are well managed.

The volunteers are placed with local organisations where they assist with and bring additional energy to local projects. EIL is clear that volunteers should not be engaged in activities that could be undertaken by local people; thus, they should not undermine local capacity. Primarily, they are placed in local organisations to learn and 'lend a hand'. Upon completing their period of service, volunteers engage in a post-service orientation programme, which encourages them to reflect on their role in their host organisations and ensures that they establish plans for longer-term engagement. Host organisation partners are invited to participate in these post-service programmes to promote considered reflection.

Facilitating long term engagement

EIL believes that the most significant part of a volunteer programme starts when volunteers return to Ireland and the organisation thus encourages longer-term engagement in a variety

of ways. According to EIL, thus far, engaging returned short-term volunteers in ways that foster development education and greater global awareness is a very under-developed area in the field of international volunteering. Returned volunteers have huge potential to act as ambassadors for global awareness; however this potential is not often developed and leveraged. For this reason EIL invests a great deal in ensuring that their volunteer programmes act as catalysts for longer term engagement and builds in programmes to support returned volunteers to continue their interest and engagement with global issues. EIL sees itself as a leader in this respect and has recently been awarded an Irish Aid grant that will support them to develop an innovative Award System which aims to foster engagement of short-term international volunteers. Their vision is to mainstream their engagement model across the international volunteering sector.

To this end, EIL has a range of programmes and opportunities to support returning volunteers to remain engaged. This includes a Development Education programme, managed in part by returned volunteers who are involved in identifying key priority areas and programme activities. In addition, EIL has established a mentorship system in which previous volunteers mentor returning volunteers. This system builds on EIL's method of encouraging peer education. EIL also facilitates discussion groups for programme alumni and connects alumni through the innovative use of social media. EIL and its alumni are connected via Facebook and twitter, which ensures that there is a virtual conversation aimed at raising awareness about global issues. Volunteers are also encouraged to connect with other agencies that have a development focus in order to expand their network and interact with organisations that may offer opportunities for lifetime engagement in development work. EIL has recently implemented a small grants programme in partnership with other organisations involved in development. Returning volunteers have the opportunity of applying for and being awarded a grant of between €100 and €500, which is to be used as seed funding to carry out awareness-raising projects. In addition, grantees are paired with mentors who assist them in developing their proposed programmes. The long-term engagement support mechanisms facilitate EIL's philosophy; that encouraging engagement in global justice issues is a mechanism by which to generate greater awareness about global issues, raise funds, and pressure governments to take action; which EIL hopes will in turn bring about real change in the world.

APPENDIX G:

Methodology

In order to identify innovative and good practice models of international volunteering using the conceptual framework, a number of international volunteering programmes had to be assessed. As a first step a dataset of organisations involved in international volunteering programmes was developed. The list of 90 organisations compiled included organisations listed by IVCO, organisations identified through VOSESA's own work in the field of international volunteering, organisations that participated in conferences on volunteering (particularly on international volunteering), and a list of Irish organisations conducting international volunteering programmes provided by Comhlámh.

An initial assessment of this database of international volunteering organisations revealed a wide range of diversity in programme scope and type of models, demonstrating that there are no set models that can summarise the range of programme types.

In order to provide more insight into this diversity of programme models, we undertook a sampling process with the original 90 organisations represented on the database. Key criteria were established to ensure that purposively selected organisations would provide as much insight into the diversity of programmes in terms of innovation and good practice as possible. Two key criteria guided the selection of organisations in the next phase of the study. These were to ensure that there was diversity in terms of both regional spread of organisations, and directionality of volunteering. The latter refers to whether organisations are only sending volunteers from the global North to the South, or whether there is evidence of south to north, south to south or reciprocal volunteering. Regional spread of organisations was determined by identifying the location of the head office of the organisation. This was to ensure that we focused not only on those organisations located in Europe and the United States, which have traditionally dominated the international volunteering landscape, but that organisations operating in Asia-Pacific, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America were also considered. This round of selection resulted in a database of 42 organisations (see Appendix A), which demonstrated interesting models. The scope of the research did not allow for an in-depth examination of all of these organisations. However an overview of the diversity of volunteer programmes is provided in the next section of this report.

Further criteria arising from the analytical framework presented above allowed the research team to narrow the focus to organisations that demonstrated particularly interesting programmes in terms of the following criteria:

- Direction of volunteering
- Types of volunteers involved
- Conceptualisation of benefit and development
- Intentionality in terms of partnerships and/or how volunteers are orientated
- Particular aspects of good practice
- Innovation in programme design

Many of the programmes that were finally selected for further attention included more than one of these criteria. This phase of selection allowed us to select 20 organisations from the original list of 90. Further research was then conducted on these twenty organisations, drawing on research reports and available evaluation and orientation material, as well as email follow ups with the organisations. Of these twenty organisations, six were selected as organisations to profile in more detail. They were selected because of their demonstration of more than three of the abovementioned criteria. These organisations were invited to participate in in-depth interviews with the research team and are profiled in the sections that follow below. However, it was felt that due to the range of diversity in innovation and good practice, further shorter vignettes of some of the other organisations that formed part of the final list of 20 organisations, would also be developed.

Limitations of the methodology

A key limitation of this methodology was that it was not possible to conduct an extensive survey to determine representative trends. Web-based data was thus used to explore the work of the organisations selected, with further engagement by email and, in some cases, interviews. Web-based information generally provides detail about the orientation and goals of an organisation, but rarely provides information about actual practice. Critical reflections on organisation position and performance are also generally not available on websites. While the basic criteria of duration, direction and areas of service were readily available, information about more critical questions such as how organisations negotiate their relationships with host organisations is not generally available on websites.

The purposive selection of organisations for innovation means that widespread trends in volunteering cannot be adequately established. Rather the organisations selected reflect trends in innovation and good practice rather than more mainstream trends.

The web-based analysis was also supplemented with document analysis where information about particular organisations and programmes was available. This analysis, alongside the interviews, provides more detail about the key features that are discussed in this report.

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