

EYV 2011 - VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

Impact of Youth Volunteering in Philippines

April - October 2011

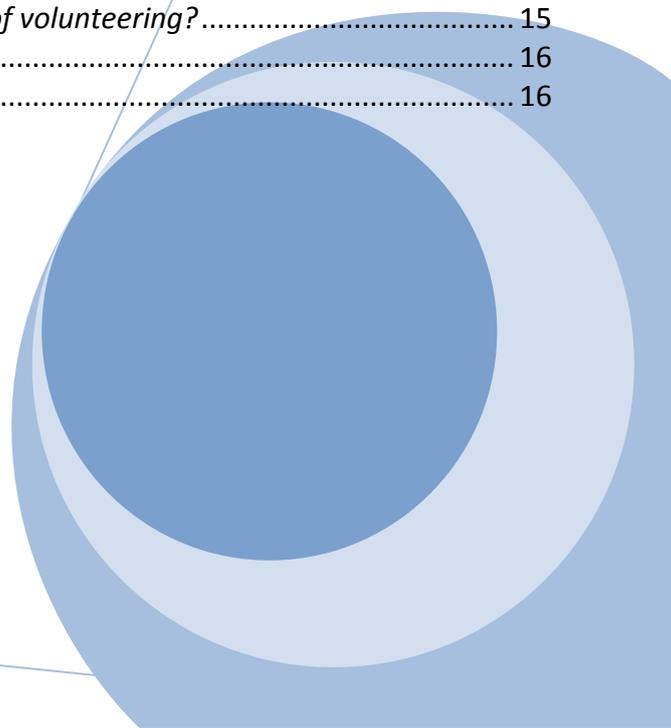
**By Mimmi Viviana Clase Hagman,
Volunteer from Sweden**



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.

Contents:

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Overview of Volunteering in Philippines.....	3
3	Action Research.....	6
3.1	The Research Process	6
3.2	ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTEERS' INPUTS.....	7
	<i>Short-term volunteers</i>	7
3.2.1	<i>Motivation</i>	7
3.2.2	<i>Voluntary Service Projects</i>	8
3.2.3	<i>Implementation</i>	8
	<i>Long-term volunteers</i>	9
3.2.4	<i>Motivation</i>	9
3.2.5	<i>Voluntary Service Projects</i>	9
3.2.6	<i>Implementation</i>	10
3.2.7	<i>Overall Perceptions of Change</i>	10
3.2.8	<i>How to maximize the positive impact of volunteering?</i>	11
3.3	ANALYSIS OF HOST PROJECTS' INPUTS	11
3.3.1	<i>Motivation and Recruitment</i>	11
3.3.2	<i>Activities and Impact Areas</i>	12
3.3.3	<i>Implementation</i>	12
3.3.4	<i>Volunteer Impact</i>	12
3.3.5	<i>How to maximize the positive impact of volunteering?</i>	13
3.4	ANALYSIS OF HOST COMMUNITIES' INPUTS	13
3.4.1	<i>Motivation</i>	13
3.4.2	<i>Community Engagement</i>	14
3.4.3	<i>Impact</i>	14
3.4.4	<i>How to maximize the positive impact of volunteering?</i>	15
4	Conclusion	16
5	Bibliography.....	16



1 Introduction

"Volunteerism" refers to an act involving a wide range of activities, including traditional forms of mutual aid and developmental interventions that provides an enabling and empowering environment both on the part of the beneficiary receiving and the volunteer rendering the act, undertaken for reasons arising from sociodevelopmental, business or corporate orientation, commitment or conviction for the attainment of the public good and where monetary and other incentives or reward are not the primary motivating factors." [1]

The definition and understanding of volunteerism vary between countries depending on the country's history, political background, religious influences and cultural traditions. This report attempts to define volunteerism from the Philippine context, as part of the project "EYV 2011 – Volunteering Matters".

2 Overview of Volunteering in Philippines

Volunteerism in the Philippines is deep-rooted since volunteer activities have been practiced for generations. The word *Bayanihan* refers to old traditions of values and is often characterized as mutual assistance, for example when community members help other members to transport their house to a specific location. The word *Bayanihan* can be seen as the traditional Philippine expression of volunteerism. The Catholic Church introduced the Western notion of charity during the era of Spanish administration and the American colonial government marked the boundaries between provision of public goods, religious philanthropy, and private NGOs. The American Red Cross was one of the first NGOs to establish in the Philippines during the American colonial period, followed by a large amount of new NGOs. Many NGOs built strong relationships with POs and poor communities during the Marcos years (1965-1986). The CSOs have played an important role during the Marcos years and have made impact on how volunteering is perceived today. Post-Marcos governments extended the collaboration with NGOs in service delivery and public policy. The private sector started with CSR activities that involved more people in volunteer work and policy framework has been established to support volunteering as a tool for socio-economic development. Research has showed that the total value of volunteer work reached 44.5 billion in Philippine Peso, accounting to 0.6% of the total GDP in 2009. [2]

Levels and Types of Activities

"Volunteer" refers to an individual or group who for reasons arising from their sociodevelopmental, business and corporate orientation, commitment or conviction, contribute time, service and resources whether on full- time or part-time basis to a just and essential social development cause, mission or endeavor in the belief that their activity is mutually meaningful and beneficial to public interest as well as to themselves." [1]

There are five major types of volunteer activities implemented by different stakeholders in the Philippine society, according to the work by Joel Beasca in 2004. [3]

1. Government-Supported Volunteering

The government supports two national volunteer programs, Volunteers for Information and Development Assistance established in 1979 and the national program for government service called *Bayanihang Bayan* established in 1991. It has been piloted in four national government agencies: Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Health, Commission on Higher Education, and Department of Social Welfare and Development. [3]

2. Academe-Based Volunteering

Academic institutions in the Philippines have been coordinating volunteer projects. Structured volunteer activities occur at the level of higher education institutions in collaboration with local communities. Private non-sectarian institutions are the most numerous among such establishments in the country followed by private schools and state universities and colleges. [3]

3. Volunteering for Non-Government Organizations

NGOs with different areas of work arrange projects and programs and assign local volunteers, as well as international volunteers. Around 630,000 volunteers have been working for non-profit institutions in

1997. The top contributors to volunteerism in the non-profit sector are organizations classified as culture and recreation groups, development and housing organizations and unions. NGOs tend to cooperate, network and create partnerships with POs, local communities, Local Government Units (LGUs), as well as with international partners. [3] Examples of large Philippine NGOs with volunteer workers are Hands on Manila, International Association for Volunteer Effort, the Philippine Red Cross and the Scout movement that is divided into Girls and Boys Scouts.

4. Corporate Volunteering

Volunteering in the Philippine business sector is a component of CSR projects. The companies make investments in community-based projects and the employees participate in volunteer work in local communities during their working hours. A common activity is the Build-a-Home Program for Habitat for Humanity International, a non-profit ministry that works to eliminate poverty by providing housing. [3]

5. Foreign-Supported Volunteering

Foreign-supported volunteer activities have increased through funding from the Germans, the British, the Americans, the Koreans and the Japanese in recent years. Foreign-supported activities cover both volunteering by foreign nationals and external deployment of Filipino volunteers in exchange programs of the VSO Bahaginan Foundation and the United Nations Volunteer Programme. [3]

International Volunteering

Government Support

The Philippine government supports international volunteering as a tool for socio-economic development through RA 9418 Volunteer Act of 2007. International volunteering is also supported by the International Volunteer Program, which is implemented by PNVSCA.¹ Through this program, technical assistance is provided by foreign volunteers to national government agencies, LGUs, academic institutions and NGOs. PNVSCA has coordinated the deployment of 1,523 foreign volunteers in 747 host organizations between year 2001 and 2009. [4]

Stakeholders

"Volunteer service organization" refers to a local or foreign group that recruits, trains, deploys and supports volunteer workers to programs and projects implemented by them or by other organizations or any group that provides services and resources, including but not limited to, information, capability building, advocacy and networking for the attainment of the common good." [1]

International volunteering covers both Philippine volunteers sent overseas and foreign volunteers sent to the Philippines. The number of incoming volunteers is higher than the number of outgoing volunteers, with a ratio of 3 foreign volunteers for every Filipino serving overseas in 2003. The government is in partnership with a group of foreign agencies that collaborate in programs with focus on peace, socio-economic development and exchange of expertise. Professionals from the Philippines are sent to work as volunteers in developing countries by the United Nations Volunteers Programme and the VSO Bahaginan Foundation and foreign professionals are sent to work as volunteers in the Philippines. [3]

There is no statistics or research that sum up information about the private organizations involved in international volunteering in the country. Volunteer projects can be in short-term or long-term periods with private funding. The recruitment of volunteers with special skills in areas of socio-economic development is not as important as the target of the organizations. Examples of established organizations are the Center for Education, Research and Volunteering Philippines, Volunteers for the Visayas and We Spark Action Inc.

¹ Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA). PNVSCA is the government agency, which promotes the implementation of various developmental strategies in forms of volunteer work in the Philippine society.

Foreign Agencies in Partnership with PNVSCA

1. *The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program*

The program is funded by Australian Government and coordinated by the Australian Agency for International Development. It aims to assist developing countries in reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development in support of the MDGs fund the program. Young Australians between the ages 18 and 30 years with skills and work experience can participate in short-term or long-term assignments from 3 months to 12 months in developing countries in Asia, the Pacific and Africa.

2. *La Delegation Catholique pour la Cooperation (DCC)*

DCC is an NGO established in 1967 and approved by the French government through the French Ministry of Foreign affairs. It is a service of the Catholic Church that sends volunteers to local communities and organizations in developing countries. French volunteers are professionals that serve for short-term periods between 3 and 6 months or for long-term periods between 12 and 24 months.

3. *The German Development Service*

GDS is a part of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The organization operates on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and is funded by the Federal Republic of Germany. Young Germans in the age between 18 and 29 can participate for a long-term period of 12 months in the GIZ "Weltwärts" Program.

4. *The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) Program*

Program aims to assist developing nations through transfer of technology. It is coordinated and funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which is a government agency for official development assistance to developing countries.

5. *The Korea Overseas Volunteers Program*

It is coordinated by the Korea International Cooperation Agency under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Korean citizens in the age between 20 and 61 years can participate in the program and the term of service for volunteers is for a long-term period of 24 months.

6. *The Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement (OISCA) International*

It is a Japan-based NGO with a coalition of members from different countries. The organization aims for environmentally sustainable development through a holistic approach in areas of agriculture and ecological integrity of the human spirit.

7. *The United Nations Volunteers (UNV)*

The UNV Programme (funded by UNDP with contributions from host governments, special purpose grants by donor governments, and the UNV Special Voluntary Fund) supports sustainable human development through the promotion of volunteerism. Volunteers are aged 25 years and above, with university degree or higher technical diploma and several years of work experience. Assignments are usually for long-term periods of 24 months in areas of technical cooperation with governments, community-based initiatives, in support of human rights and in electoral and peace- building processes.

8. *The Peace Corps*

Agency funded in 1961 devoted to world peace and friendship by the government of the United States. Volunteers provide technical assistance to local projects in developing countries in areas of education, youth and community development, health, communications technology, agriculture and environment. Volunteers are US citizens aged 18 years and above and work in long-term assignments of 27 months.

9. *Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)*

The organization is as a federation of member organizations that contributes resources to a shared development programme. Member organizations of the federations are based in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain (UK), Canada, Kenya and the Philippines. VSO Bahaginan is the name of the federation of members in Asia and the Pacific and is based in the Philippines. Volunteers are professionals in the age between 18 and 75 years that contribute with skills and knowledge in local communities in developing countries, usually for long-term assignments of 24 months. The Global

Xchange programme is a special program for young people aged 18-25 with equal numbers of volunteers coming from the Philippines and the UK.

3 Action Research

Introduction

This report attempts to assess the impact and describe the benefits and challenges of international volunteering, as perceived by international volunteers, host organizations and people from the host communities in the Philippines, in collaboration with We Spark Action, Inc. (SPARK). We Spark Action is one of the 16 partner organizations in the project "EYV 2011 –Volunteering Matters" on the occasion of the European Year of Volunteers 2011 (EYV 2011) and the 10th anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10). The project is coordinated by the International Office of the International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) Federation.

We Spark Action, Inc.

We Spark Action was established in May 2011 and is formerly known as Exchange for Youth Empowerment Service (EYES), founded in 2008. The organization is a Philippine non-governmental and non-profit organization, registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and aims to empower youth through intercultural exchanges and activities. We Spark Action collaborates with non-governmental organizations, public institutions, local governmental units and community-based development centers to promote community development, voluntary services and intercultural learning.

Programs

Volunteer programs with international volunteers are both for short-term and long-term periods. Participants are aged 14 years and above for short-term periods and 18 years and above for long-term periods. The placements are in communities with grassroots organizations. Short-term programs are usually organized as workcamps through the Network for Voluntary Development in Asia (NVDA) and the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) and the partner organization, the International Workcamp Organization (IWO). International volunteers come from the International Workcamp Organization (IWO) Korea, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) Korea, the Never-ending International workCamps Exchange (NICE) Japan, the Council on International Exchange (CIEE) Japan and the Vision Youth Action (VYA) Taiwan. Around 800 short-term volunteers have been part of the workcamps since 2008. Long-term projects are coordinated through the ICYE network. We Spark Action has been host to 18 long-term volunteers since August 2009. Member organizations of ICYE in Germany have sent 13 volunteers since 2009, through four different programs. Member organizations of ICYE in Sweden, Iceland, Italy and Germany have sent 5 long-term volunteers in total, with the European Voluntary Service (EVS) program and two Philippine volunteers have been sent to Iceland through the EVS program since 2009.

3.1 The Research Process

Participants

The research was implemented from July to August 2011 with 55 participants. The participating international short-term volunteers come from IWO Korea, VYA Taiwan, the Chung Chou University of Science and Technology in collaboration with VYA Taiwan. The participating international long-term volunteers come from ICJA Germany and PeaceWorks Sweden. The participating host organizations and host communities are located in Metro Manila (Caloocan City and Quezon City) in the Quezon Province (Lucena City) and in Cebu (Olango Island, Lapu-Lapu City).

Questionnaires

Questionnaires in English have been prepared by the ICYE International Office but changes have been made to the original templates to adjust the questions to the participants in the Philippines. Separate questionnaires have been used for the four different categories of participants: Short-term volunteers, long-term volunteers, host organizations and host communities. The questionnaires for

long-term volunteers have additional open-ended questions in comparison to questionnaires for short-term volunteers. English is a common spoken language in the Philippines and no translations have been made to Tagalog the official language or to Cebuano the regional language in the southern parts of the country.

Implementation

Participants have been informed about the aims of the project "EYV 2011 - Volunteering Matters". No names of participants are exposed in the report. The interviews with international short-term volunteers have been held in groups of 10 persons. Long-term volunteers have been interviewed one by one as with the host organizations and people from the host communities. A note pad and a pen have been used during the data collection due to technical problems with the recorder. Language difficulties have occurred during the interviews. To ensure validity, multiple methods and sources of information have been used to confirm the qualitative and quantitative results in the collection of data. To adjust the language problem, the questions have been read out in some cases and complemented with additional questions during the interview sessions to prevent any misunderstandings that may occur. Workcamp leaders of groups with short-term volunteers have translated the questionnaires to Mandarin and Korean during the interviews.

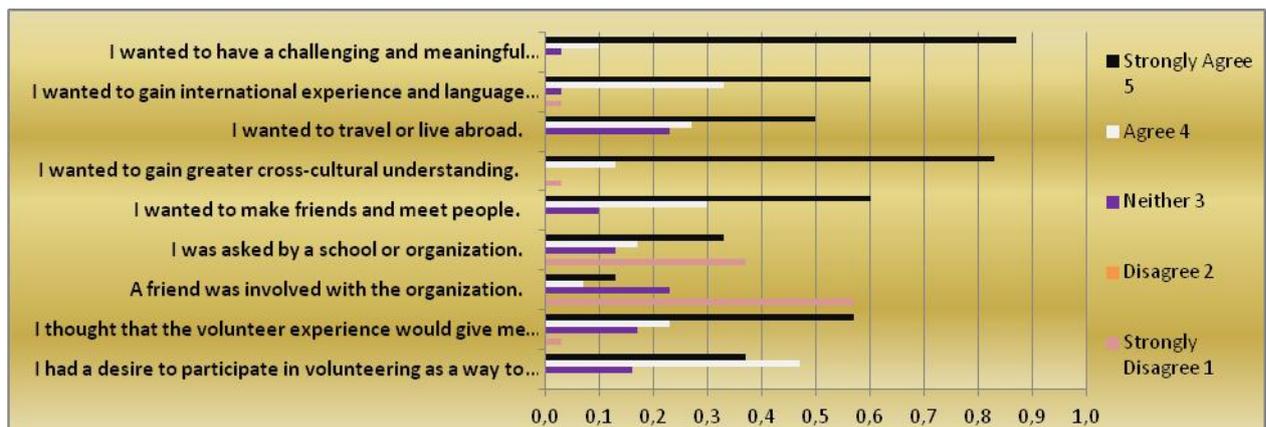
3.2 ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTEERS' INPUTS

Short-term volunteers

The majority of short-term volunteers are students, aged between 15 and 30 years, 2 % of the 30 participants have previous experience with international volunteering. All participants stayed for two weeks in Cebu (Olongo Island, Lapu-Lapu City).

3.2.1 Motivation

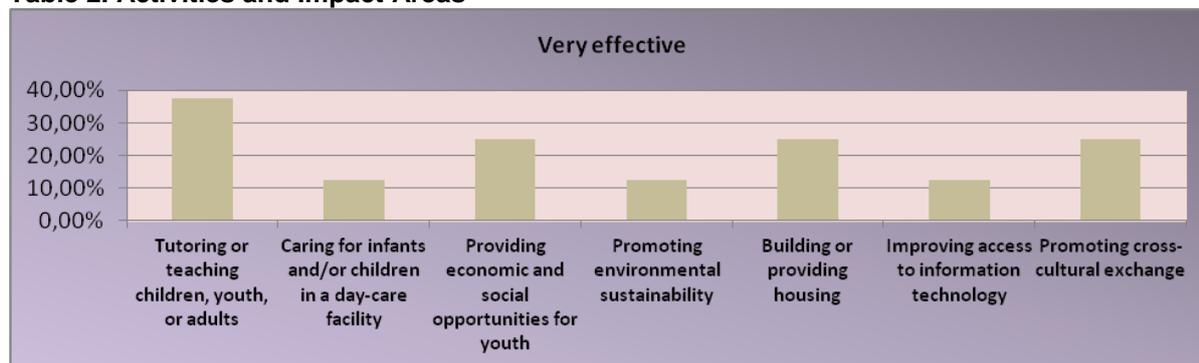
Table 1. Incentive to Volunteer Abroad



The expectations of international volunteering and a personal interest are main factors that have motivated the participants. 87% of the participants strongly agreed that they wanted to have a challenging and meaningful experience and 83% strongly agreed that they wanted to gain greater cross-cultural understanding by volunteering abroad.

3.2.2 Voluntary Service Projects

Table 2. Activities and Impact Areas



The majority of volunteer activities focus on social services. The promotion of environmental sustainability is the most common activity. Other common activities are related to cross-cultural exchange and tutoring or teaching children, youth or adults.

3.2.3 Implementation

Most of the participants perceived that they can support the host communities with volunteer work. 50% of the participants strongly agreed that they have transferred useful skills for their projects, compared to 3% of the participants who strongly agreed that the local staff members could provide these services instead of the volunteers. The international volunteers were able to interact and socialize both with the local people and with other international volunteers since all participants lived together with other international volunteers and worked in groups with local volunteers and local staff from the host organizations.

The majority of participants 64% strongly agreed that they are very interested in being part of the host communities. The majority of the participants indicated that they have limited skills in the language of the host country but 73% strongly agreed that the local staff supported them well during their volunteer work. The results showed that effective communication between the local people and the volunteers may have been a challenge because of limited language skills but the general collaboration and interaction have been perceived well.

Overall Perceptions of Change:

"They have limited water, so we have to reduce our water consumption." –Participant

"I could feel the globe. I am aware that there is big inequality between countries by living here." –Participant

"I meet a lot of different people, so I have more confidence in communication." –Participant

The majority of participants have experienced living with limited resources and they described that their perspective changed in areas related to the understanding of environmental issues. Other participants mentioned that they have become aware of the economic differences between countries. Some participants expressed that they have gained stronger confidence in their communication skills and have increased their cross-cultural understanding by meeting with people from different cultures and countries. The results show that the participants felt that they have gained new knowledge through experiences of non-formal and informal learning during the period of their volunteer work.

How to Maximize the Positive Impact of Volunteering?

"If there is an opportunity for volunteers to home stay, the understanding of international volunteering service would be much more successful and satisfied." –Participant

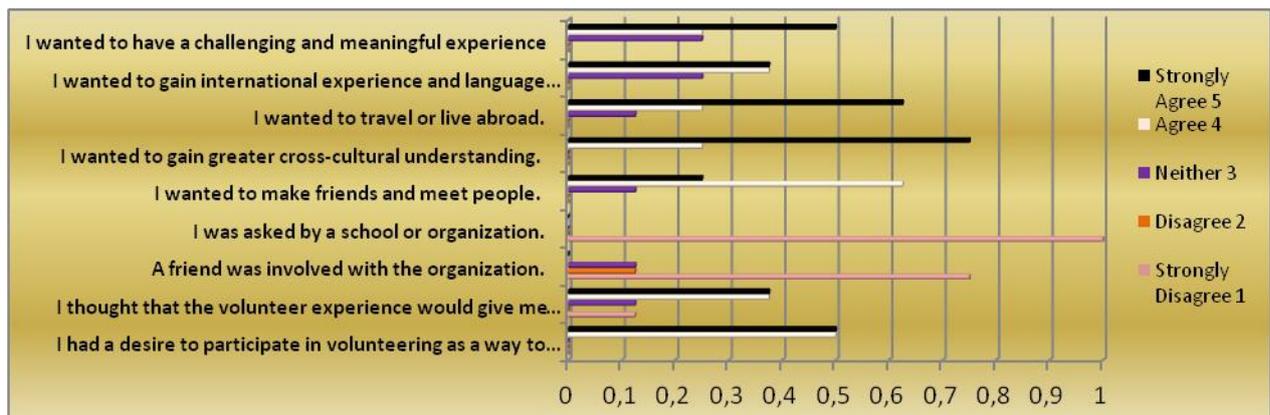
Common suggestions from the participants about how to maximize the positive impact of volunteering are to increase the promotion of the programs and projects, organise more trainings with the volunteers during their volunteer work and make it possible for short-term volunteers to live together with local people.

Long-term volunteers

The long-term volunteers are aged between 19 and 30 years and the majority have graduated from high school, 2 of the 8 participants (25%) have previous experience with international volunteering. The majority of the participants stayed for 12 months in the Philippines with placements in Metro Manila (Caloocan City and Quezon City), in the Quezon Province (Lucena City) and in Cebu (Olango Island, Lapu-Lapu City).

3.2.4 Motivation

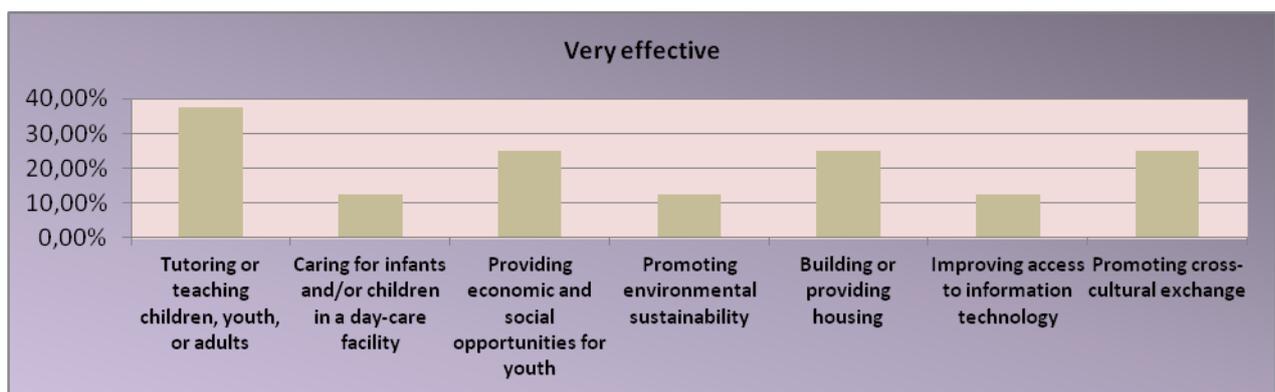
Table 3. Incentive to Volunteer Abroad



The results showed that the majority of the participants are interested in international volunteering as a way to gain intercultural knowledge through living and working abroad. 6 of 8 participants (75%) strongly agreed that they wanted to gain greater cross-cultural understanding and 5 of 8 participants (62.5%) strongly agreed that they wanted to travel and live abroad.

3.2.5 Voluntary Service Projects

Table 4. Activities and Impact Areas



The majority of volunteer activities focus on social services. The most common activity is tutoring or teaching children, youth or adults, in which 3 of 8 participants (37.5%) have been involved. Other common volunteer activities are providing economic and social opportunities for youth, building or providing housing and promoting cross-cultural exchange.

3.2.6 Implementation

All participants have been working with local staff from the host organization and with local volunteers. 6 of 8 participants (75%) have been working together with other international volunteers. The most common accommodation for long-term volunteers is living with a host family. 6 of 8 participants (75%) lived with host families and 4 of 8 participants (50%) shared their accommodation with other international volunteers.

The majority of participants agreed that they have transferred useful skills for the host organization and most participants disagreed that their presence in the community may have caused problems. The majority, 6 of 8 participants (75%), strongly agreed that they are highly interested in volunteering, and 6 of 8 participants (75%) agreed that they tried to make a positive difference in their respective host community. Overall, the results show that the participants have positive perception about the impact of their volunteer work.

The knowledge of the host country's language has been a difficult area, 4 of 8 participants (50%) indicated that they are able to communicate only in a very limited capacity in Tagalog, the host country's official language, and 2 of 8 participants (25%) indicated that their knowledge of English is limited, but the majority, 5 of 8 participants (62.5%), agreed that the local staff has supported them well with their tasks throughout their volunteer placement. The overall results show that the cooperation and interaction with local staff has been perceived well by the participants despite the challenges they may have faced with respect to language skills.

Remarkable Moments with Benefits and Challenging Moments

"Another volunteer and I didn't feel integrated in the community in the beginning." –Participant
"One member of my host family died. The ceremony was ongoing for two weeks and I didn't know how to act in this moment. I had good friends to talk to but it was a challenging moment." –Participant

The first period of stay has been challenging for some long-term volunteers. Cultural differences, difficulty integrating with the host community and the feeling of loneliness are examples of difficulties that the participants have experienced.

"We had evaluations with the kids in the project and when they were happy and satisfied, I felt very happy too and I thought that my work can make impact. I became a part of the community and could see it from inside when I worked, lived and had my friends there." –Participant

The majority of the participants described that their best moments were when they felt that they could contribute to the community with their volunteer projects. Some participants have mentioned the time with their host families where they have developed strong friendships, the feeling of integration with the host community and friendship with the locals as examples of good experiences.

3.2.7 Overall Perceptions of Change

"No fluent water, no hot water, no shower, no "Western" toilets, simple lifestyle, higher knowledge for environment, experience with children and international knowledge." –Participant

Some of the participants mentioned that they perceived an overall change in lifestyle due to the new environment and culture with other habits in the everyday life, which has resulted in experiences of informal learning.

"I transferred as a person, I have learned new stuff like riding a motorbike, diving, construction work and I am more independent now." –Participant

"I think in another way now, I have new perspective on things. When I talked to people, I understand what injustice is because I have something to relate to now. All the conversations and meetings with different people have inspired me and they are invaluable memories. I am more humble and thankful now." –Participant

The participants have started to reflect on themselves and their abilities as a result of the change in environment and lifestyle. Meeting new people at work and after work increased the intercultural understanding and the participants expressed that they are more accepting towards new cultures and diverse groups of people. Learning new languages and intercultural knowledge are some of the benefits that the participants mentioned and some described that they now feel more confident and independent. Creativity in work was stimulated and some of the participants now have a clearer picture of what they would like to do in the future.

Volunteering in the Future?

Among the participants, 4 of 8 (50%) are uncertain if they will volunteer in other countries again, but 4 of 8 participants (50%) mentioned that they will continue volunteering in their home countries. The result shows that experiences from international volunteering could be a factor that encourages them to do volunteer activities in their home countries.

3.2.8 How to maximize the positive impact of volunteering?

“I think there should be more communication between the organizations, to make the volunteering more clear and organized for the volunteers.” –Participant

The majority of the suggestions on maximizing the positive impact of volunteering are related to the organization and implementation of volunteer work. The participants recommended more promotion of programs and projects, and for future volunteers, the option to stay with host families.

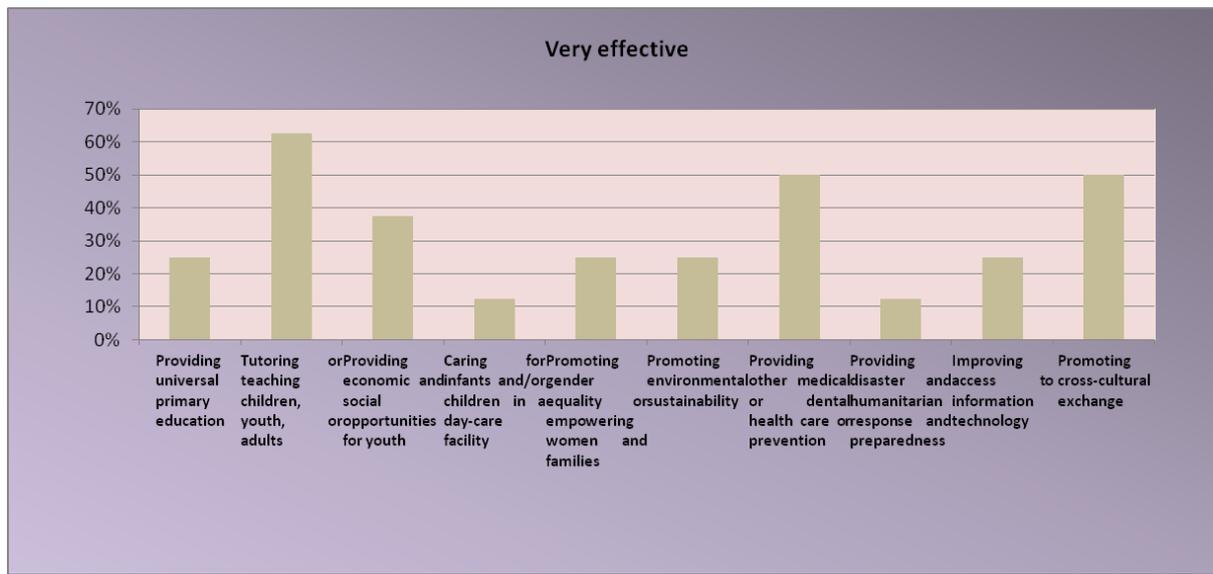
3.3 ANALYSIS OF HOST PROJECTS' INPUTS

The 8 participating host organizations are located in Metro Manila (Caloocan City and Quezon City), in the Quezon Province (Lucena City) and in Cebu (Olango Island, Lapu-Lapu City). Most of the host organizations have previous experiences with international volunteers. Some of the participating organizations started hosting international volunteers in 2002, 4 of 8 participating host organizations (50%) started in 2009 and 1 of 8 host organizations (12.5%) started in 2011.

3.3.1 Motivation and Recruitment

Many factors have motivated the organizations to host international volunteers but the exchange of culture is the most common factor. None of the host organizations asks for specific skills when they recruit international volunteers but many organizations have mentioned the importance of basic English language skills and the willingness to learn new languages.

3.3.2 Activities and Impact Areas



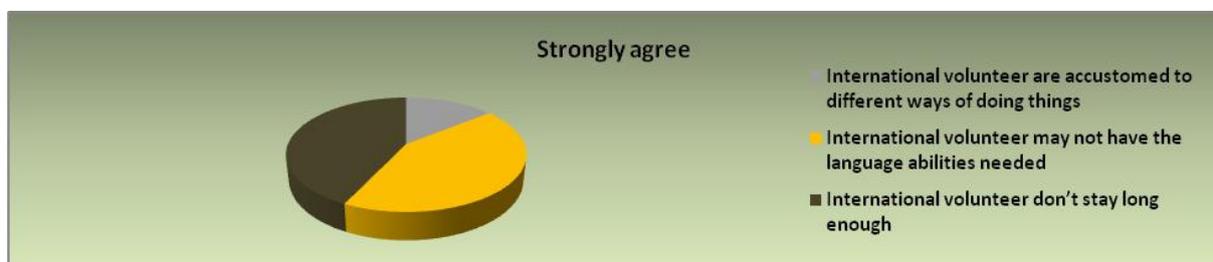
The majority of volunteer projects, coordinated by the host organizations, focus on social services. The most common activity, implemented by the host organizations, is tutoring or teaching children, youth or adults, 5 of 8 participants (62.5%) are involved in these activities. Other common volunteer projects among the host organizations are promoting cross-cultural exchange and providing medical or dental health care or prevention.

3.3.3 Implementation

The majority of projects for international volunteers are suggested by the partner organization of the host organizations and some of the projects are created by the staff of the host organization, based on feedback from the local communities. Most of the host organizations provide at least one staff member who will support international volunteers during their volunteering period.

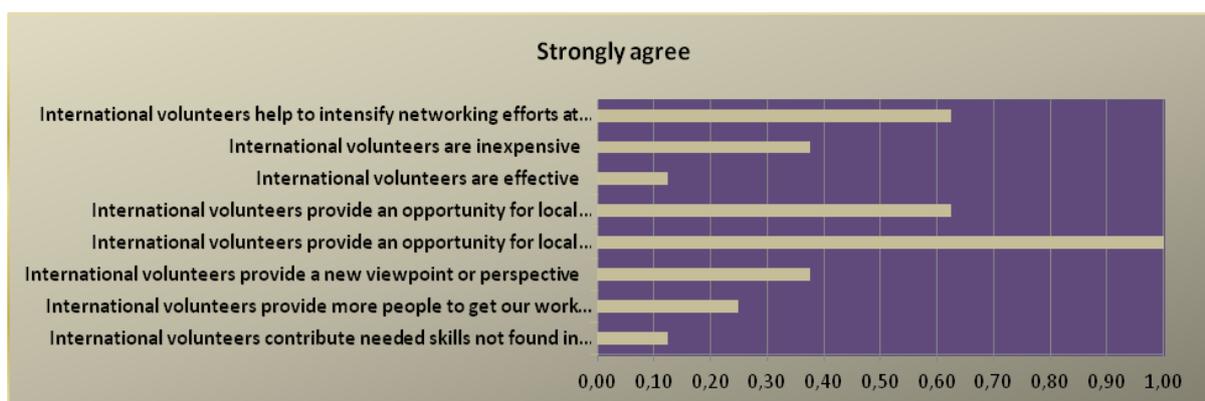
3.3.4 Volunteer Impact

Table 6. Challenges



The challenges of international volunteering, as perceived by the host organizations are related to the work and language skills. 3 of 8 participants from the host organizations (37.5%) strongly agreed that international volunteers do not stay long enough and that limited language abilities are challenging factors and 1 of 8 participants (12.5%) strongly agreed that international volunteers are accustomed to different ways of doing things.

Table 7. Benefits



All participants strongly agreed that international volunteers provide an opportunity for local people to learn more about other nations and cultures. 5 of 8 participants (62.5%) strongly agreed that they provided an opportunity for local people to learn more about their own nation and culture, and 5 of 8 participants (62.5%) strongly agreed that international volunteers helped to intensify networking efforts at national and international levels. All participants from the host organizations agreed that international volunteers generally provided more benefits than challenges.

3.3.5 How to maximize the positive impact of volunteering?

“The volunteer could stay for more days, longer stay more impact.” –Participant

The majority of suggestions about how to maximize the positive impact of volunteering are related to the organization of work, for example, when it comes to work assignments of the volunteers, language lessons and the time period that volunteers stay.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF HOST COMMUNITIES’ INPUTS

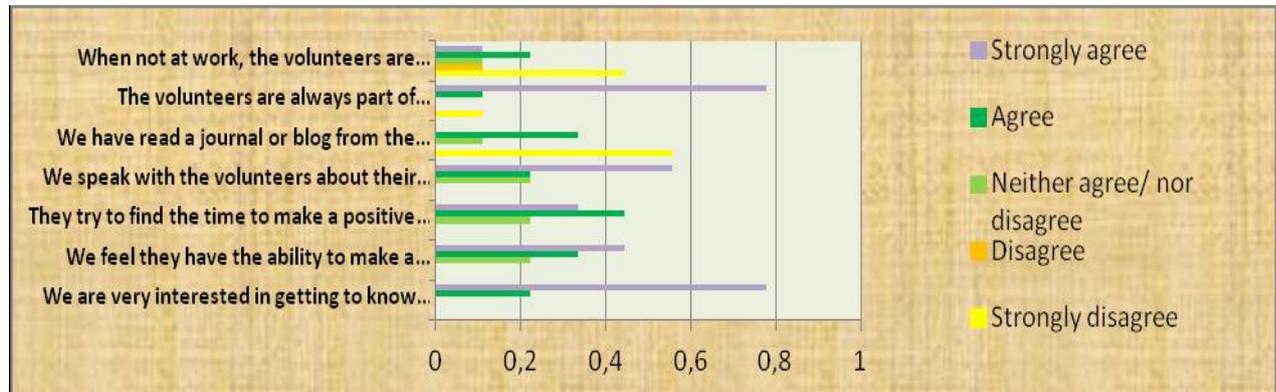
The 9 participants from the host communities that are located in Metro Manila (Caloocan City and Quezon City), in the Quezon Province (Lucena City) and in Cebu (Olango Island, Lapu-Lapu City). All participants have previous experiences with international volunteers, 4 of 9 (44.4%) have experience with short-term volunteers and 5 of 9 (55.5%) have experience with long-term volunteers. 4 of 9 participants (44.4%) have been hosting international volunteers in their homes, 4 of 9 (44.4%) have been working as local volunteers together with international volunteers and 1 participant lives in one of the host communities.

3.4.1 Motivation

The participants from the host communities mentioned that the most common reasons to host international volunteers are to get to know other cultures, develop friendships and help the country. The results show that the factors motivating the hosting of international volunteers stem from the personal interest of participants but also in consideration with the host community, as a way to improve things.

3.4.2 Community Engagement

Table 8. Involvement in the community



The majority 7 of 9 participants (77.78%) strongly agreed that they are very interested in getting to know international volunteers and that volunteers are always a part of the activities in the host community. 5 of 9 participants (55.56%) strongly agreed that they regularly talk with the volunteers about their experiences. The results show that the participants from the host communities have a positive perception of the community’s involvement related to the integration of international volunteers.

3.4.3 Impact

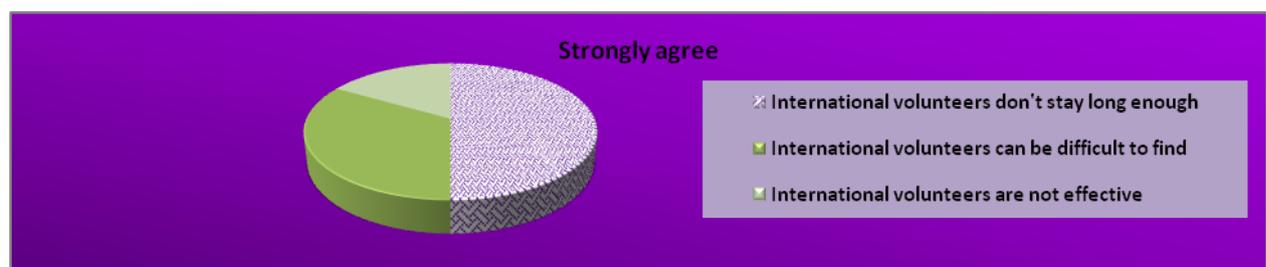
“It’s in a little way. It definitely improves and contributes to the community especially for the children.”

– Participant

“Yes, in collaboration with local people, identifying the need of the community.” – Participant

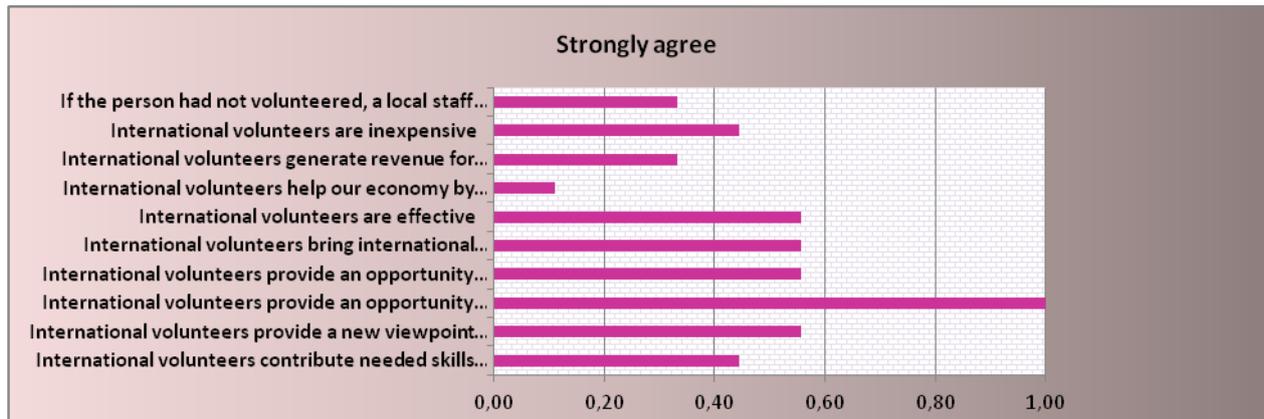
The majority of the participants perceived that international volunteers contributed to improvements within the community in cooperation with the local people.

Table 9. Challenges



The challenges of international volunteering, as perceived by the participants from the host communities, are related to work. 3 of 9 participants (33.3%) strongly agreed that international volunteers don’t stay long enough. 2 of 9 participants (22.2%) strongly agreed that volunteers were difficult to find, and 1 of 9 participants (11.1%) strongly agreed that international volunteers are not effective.

Table 10. Benefits



There are many benefits that the participants strongly agreed with, 5 of 9 participants (55.56%) strongly agreed that international volunteers brought international attention to the host community and that they provided a new viewpoint or perspective. All participants from the host communities believed that international volunteers provided an opportunity for local people to learn more about other countries and cultures. 5 of 9 participants (55.56%) think that international volunteers provided an opportunity for local people to learn more about their own nation and culture.

Exchange of Knowledge

Participants from the host communities mentioned that they have learned new things from the volunteers, such as new languages, how to ride a long board and doing yoga.

“I learned that whatever your nationality is all people are all the same.” –Participant

The experiences from non-formal learning have resulted in the participants learning more about environmental issues, cross-cultural understanding and increased acceptance towards diverse groups of people through meetings with international volunteers.

“By simply having a talk with the volunteer, sharing thoughts and experiences and by asking about how they think about life.” –Participant

“Yes, because there is an exchange of communication. They learn from us and the other way around.” –Participant

The participants mentioned that there is an exchange of knowledge between the volunteers and the locals in the host community. The results showed that the participants from the host communities felt that they experienced processes of mutual informal learning through meetings with international volunteers.

3.4.4 How to maximize the positive impact of volunteering?

“I think the volunteers should learn the language of the locals, so there are no longer barriers and the community feels more comfortable with the volunteers.” –Participant

A common suggestion to maximize the positive impact of volunteering is related to increasing the ability among international volunteers to speak the local language. Other suggestions are to enable international volunteers to stay for longer periods and promote the local projects more.

IYV+10 and EYV 2011

The celebration of the 10th anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV+10) and the European Year of Volunteers 2011 (EYV 2011) are highlighted by this survey. The expectations among the participants in relation to these events are to involve more people in voluntary work, promote the work of the organizations and the benefits of volunteering.

4 Conclusion

This report aimed at assessing the impact and describing the benefits and challenges of international volunteering, as perceived by international volunteers, host organizations and people from the host communities in the Philippines, in collaboration with We Spark Action, Inc. Challenges that the participants experienced mostly depend on the organization of work and difficulties in communication due to limited language skills. Most of the recommendations to maximize the positive impact of volunteering are related to the mentioned challenges. Participants from host organizations and host communities mentioned that the impact of volunteering will increase if volunteers stay for longer periods of time. Other suggestions are to clarify the volunteers' assignments for all involved and improve the implementation of language courses. Suggestions related to raising the awareness of international volunteering and highlighting IYV+10 and EYV 2011 are to increase the promotion of volunteer projects and programs.

The results show that the impact of international volunteering is an exchange of knowledge with practical learning opportunities for all participants. The participants have experienced several benefits with invaluable exchanges of knowledge that have resulted in non-formal learning and informal learning for all involved. Exchanges of knowledge have made a profound impact at a personal level for the participants and also at the local level for the involved host organizations and host communities. Extended social networks through friendships among the participants contribute to benefits at an international level with increased solidarity among people and across borders.

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