

EYV 2011 - VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

Impact of Youth Volunteering in Brazil

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1 Overview of Volunteering in Brazil

How volunteering is understood and perceived in Brazil

Volunteering started in Brazil in the 19th Century focusing on benevolence. During that time charity organisations were used to help people suffering from social problems, these people were regarded as a disgrace to society and in need of help. Wealthy families, mostly with good intentions, donated they're used items to the needy.

From the 20th century welfare charities have been assisted by the government and in the 1930's a social assistance policy was introduced, caring for those in need become public policy and living conditions became the responsibility of the state. Although the creation of these policies was done with good intentions the mentality of the Brazilian population still favoured the individual which didn't help the voluntary sector at all.

The 60's saw the end of social welfare, the voluntary movement was challenged by the government and found itself without direction or support. The people revolted against this and there was a liberal movement against these decisions supported by the people. Social organisations supported by volunteers started to appear again, but these organisations were ill guided, spontaneous and naive. They mainly stood in the protests supporting the social movement.

During the 80's as Latin America became more democratised neo-liberalism was emerging helping to govern political-economic-cultural relations. As the states reduced the government support in social organisations volunteers stepped in to fill the gaps. Now it is a joint initiative between the government and civil society, including corporations and social organisations. Volunteering is beginning to be seen as playing a key role in the intervention of social problems. Voluntary work within the health sector helped reduce a number of social problems helping show how volunteering can benefit all those involved in the volunteering process.

The 90's saw an influx of people who understood the importance of volunteering and were willing to donate their time and skills to improving their society. The movement "Citizens Action Against Hunger, Poverty and for Life", created in March 1993, was pivotal in awakening Brazilian society to the need and success of voluntary actions. Its proposal: to stop waiting for structural actions and encourage immediate action for the hungry. As a result of this many other groups formed similar alliances simultaneously helping local society and urging the government to take action.

In 1996 the "*Programa Voluntários*" Volunteer Programme created the Community Solidarity Council, a national volunteer network which still operates today in around 60 cities across Brazil, they are financially and administratively independent and work to relive state specific problems.

International volunteering and volunteering agencies in Brazil

International volunteering in a relatively small operation in Brazil in relation to the size of the country, it is also something impossible to calculate. Due to complications with the Brazilian government's system in respect to volunteer visas, most volunteers enter the country with a student visa and usually complete language courses at the local federal university to justify their need for a student visa. The number of international "volunteers" in Brazil is a number one can only guess at, and from my research, talks with volunteer agencies and social projects I would guess that the number is rather low.

ABIC – ICYE Brazil (Associação Brasileira de Intercâmbio Cultural) operates in Rio Grande do Sol (southern Brazil) and Salvador (north east Brazil);

ACM (Brazilian branch of the YMCA) runs a small voluntary exchange programme;

UNV have a small workforce of international volunteers;

A number of religious institutions host international volunteers from their partners in other countries;

Weltwaerts uses a number of partners including ABIC and religious institutions host volunteers;

AIESEC also runs internships abroad.

International Volunteering and the Brazilian Government

If one takes into account the issues with procuring visas for volunteers one can see that the government does not make it easy for people to volunteer. This has many negative effects on volunteering in Brazil mainly they have no way to define numbers of international volunteers in Brazil and therefore no way to record the positive and negative effects of international volunteering.

2 Action Research

2.1 ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTEERS' INPUTS

2.1.1 General Information about Volunteers

13 volunteers participated in the questionnaire.

Gender: 9 female
4 male

Previous experience with volunteering: Yes – 3
No – 10

Total duration of voluntary service:

Out of the 26 international volunteers that have served with ABIC from 2010-2011:

21 (80%) have been on the 12 months long term programme
3 (11,5%) have completed 6 months programmes
2 (7,7%) have completed short-term programmes for 4 months or less

2.1.2 Motivation

Why did you choose to participate in a voluntary exchange programme?
(1=Disagree, 4=Neither, 7=Agree)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I had a desire to participate in volunteering as a way to reduce social or economic inequality.				2	6	2	3
I thought that the volunteer experience would give me skills useful in school or in a job.		3			4	6	2
I had a desire to make a difference by helping others.				4	2	3	4
I wanted to make friends and meet people.			1	1	3	4	4
I wanted to gain greater cross-cultural understanding.						4	9
I wanted to travel or live abroad.				1	1	4	11
I wanted to gain international experience and language skills.					1		8
I wanted to have a challenging and meaningful experience.			1	1		1	10

Some volunteers shared their reasons for volunteering:

- I wanted to open myself more for this one world we got;
- To make me see and appreciate what I have been lucky enough to receive in this life;
- I wanted to participate in this volunteering work because I wanted to go to Brazil but not as a tourist but doing something else, a meaningful work;
- Working for a better world and intercultural learning.
- Have a year off, to think about future

2.1.3 Activities and Impact Areas

How well do you think you achieved the following outcomes?
(0=NA, 1=ineffective, 4=neither, 7=very effective)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Providing universal primary education	5			1	1	3	3	
Tutoring/teaching children/youth/adults	1					4	5	3
Helping community members learn to read, speak, write or understand English or another foreign language	2	3		1		2		1
Helping community members learn to read or write in their local language	6	1			1	3	2	
Providing economic and social opportunities for youth	6			1	1	1	3	1
Caring for infants and/or children in a day-care facility	5			1	1		3	3
Promoting gender equality or empowering women and families	6				3	3	1	
Promoting environmental sustainability	9				2	3		
Strengthening civil society	7					4	1	1
Promoting cross-cultural exchange	4				1	2	3	3
Supporting conflict resolution	5					3	2	2

Other objectives:

- Information and IT and computing.
- Teaching fundamental education and proper behaviour in the children's environment.
- Teaching physical education
- The Volunteers also gave examples of what helped them most in learning new things, both about themselves and the culture:
- My main activity in the project was giving flute lessons for children from a poorer social background. Of course, working with them, spending time with them and teaching them helped me a lot in learning for myself as well
- Assisting the teachers doing their work as well as my own education helped me realizing the project's goals
- Spending time with my host family and Brazilians
- Teaching English to children and adolescents
- Talking with the children about their daily life made me learn lot about the circumstances they are living in

Doing different activities with the children made me learn with lacks and needs they have, and by doing the activities all alone I learned al lot about passing on knowledge to difficult children and how to handle with them in the best way.

2.1.4 Training / Institutional Support

How much support/training do you feel you received from your sending and hosting organisation, and your project? (1=disagree, 4=neither, 7=agree)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I received thorough training on the host culture or received thorough training on my volunteer duties	1	2	2	3	3	2	
I received thorough training on my volunteer duties at my project.	1	2	3	1	4	2	
Sending organization staff supported me well before and throughout my volunteer placement.	3	2	1	2	4		1

Local staff supported me well throughout my volunteer placement.		2	4		3	3	1
I was trained through everyday tasks.	2			3	1	2	5

2.1.5 Cultural Immersion

What were your living and working conditions like?

	Yes	No
I served alone in my placement (without other volunteers).	6	7
I served in a group with another/other local volunteer(s).	5	8
I served in a group with another/other international volunteer(s).	3	10
I lived together with other volunteers.		13

How did the host organisation help you in settling in, introducing the culture and support?
(1=disagree, 4=neither, 7=agree)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It organizes a lot of activities between the volunteers.	2	3	2	3	1	2	
It organizes a lot of activities, which include the host community.	4	6	2				1
In any activity, the volunteers are asked to participate.	2	1	2	2	3	1	2
The host organization provides the support when planning activities.	3	2	2	3	1	2	
I can see that the host organization and the community have a good communication	1	3	2	2	2	1	1
I think my hosts knew a lot about me before I came.	4	2	1	3	2	1	

2.1.6 General Impact

How do you feel your contributions were received?
(1=disagree, 4=neither, 7=agree)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I had a specific skill needed by the host organization.	3	2		4	2	1	1
I transferred useful skills to the host organization.	3	1	2	1	5		1
I made a lasting contribution to the organization or community members.	1	2	1	2	3	2	2
I provided money or other physical resources to the host organization or community members.	9			1	1	1	1
My services could have been more effectively provided by a full-time staff member.	4	1	2	3	1		2
If I had not volunteered, a local staff member would have provided these services.	11	1	1				
My presence in the community may have caused some problems.	10	2					1

Some of the volunteers explained some of the difficulties they experienced in the communities:

- Initially I may have caused inefficiency problems because of my insufficient language skills

- *I work fulltime and fulfilled tasks that would not have been fulfilled by other staff members.*
- *Feeling unwell because one more person lives with them for free and is different.*
- *They also explained any resources they provided:*
- *I organized a campaign of collection of clothes for the winter.*
- *I joined some donations in Germany to have money for to spent in material in my project*
- *I fundraised in Germany to buy winter clothes for some of the children.*

2.1.7 Community Engagement

Do you want to engage with the Community?
(1=disagree, 4=neither, 7=agree)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am very interested in being a part of my host community			1	1	6	2	3
I feel I have the ability to make a difference in my host community.		3		4	1	2	3
I try to find the time to make a positive difference in my host community.		1	2	5	1	2	2
I am highly interested in volunteering.					3	5	5
I am very interested in joining local groups, projects or clubs.			1	1		4	7

Below the volunteers explained what makes them feel more integrated into the community:

- *My host family*
- *Friendships with the host community*
- *That the work I do is really needed*
- *They were very friendly, they appreciate my work and we made a very good work group.*
- *Spending time with my host family and locals, taking part in every –day activities*
- *Their acceptance, respect and interest*
- *Twice a week I join the rehearsals of a choir and once a week I have dancing lessons. Apart from that, I recognize people i meet in the streets, join family feasts etc.*
- *My “host community” is an extremely dangerous ghetto (favela) in which I could not be integrated due to drug dealing and homicide*

Below the volunteers highlight the challenges they faced when communicating with the community:

- *I could not talk with the community about my difficulties in dealing with misery and violence in the favela as they would not understand what I was talking about. As the poverty is part of their life, they do not understand why it causes such great impact on me*
- *At the beginning the main problem in the interaction with the local community was the language. I only knew a few phrases in Portuguese and thus had to communicate via gestures or pointing at things. However, the longer I stayed here, the more I learned, so now if there are any misunderstandings I manage to solve them by talking about it with the people*
- *To me it seems much better to clearly separate the relationships with people of the host community with people from my host family. The difference in social class and way of life is just too huge to get both worked out together at the same time. I have –up until now- preferred to keep these two “worlds” apart*
- *Many of the volunteers are from the same country and have been since August last year, also I am volunteering alone in my project so don't have the chance to socialise with other volunteers. My host family are very friendly and organise a lot of activities for me. I have found it hard to make friends my age in the local community*
- *Some people of the local community just thought that there is a rich German coming to see the poverty so I conversed with them.*
- *The language was a problem. I solved the problem by learning the language.*

2.1.8 Personal Impact

How do you feel this year has affected you personally?
(1=disagree, 4=neither, 7=agree)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It greatly increased my appreciation of other peoples' cultures.				1	3	4	5
It increased my participation in cultural, environmental or leisure activities.				2	2	7	2
It exposed me to communities different from the one(s) that I grew up in.						2	11
I was exposed to new ideas and ways of seeing the world.		1			2		10
I gained a better understanding of the community where I worked.				1	3	1	8
It improved my chances of finding a job.		1	1	3	4	3	1
It encouraged me to make positive career changes.	2	1		1	1	2	2
It challenged my previous beliefs or assumptions about my home country.			2	1	2	6	2
When I go back home, I want to join efforts to promote social or economic development.		2			2	5	4
Overall, I am highly satisfied with my volunteer experience so far.		1		1	2	2	7
It has been a "transformational experience" (one that results in significant changes in my life that probably would not have occurred if I had not participated in volunteering).			1	3	2	2	5

Below the volunteers explain how this experience has affected them:

- *Taking care of our world. Different view of the world.*
- *Get a wider view how things are connected in the world*
- *Now I speak Portuguese...*
- *I know now what life is about.*
- *My life hasn't changed, but my personality has changed somewhat. I still have the same idea what to do after this year as I had before, but I think my way to deal and to think about the things that happened to me becomes different with the volunteer experiences. For to sum it up, I consider myself as a more critical and more self-confident person*
- *I have learnt my weaknesses and I am learning how to combat them*
- *It has made me even more aware of my privileged life. I well very blessed for having all these opportunities in life and I cannot believe what a great gift this is. I have learned to love and appreciate my family even more and I thank God for all of them. There is nothing more important than family*
- *I learned a lot about myself that I wouldn't have learnt if I had stayed at home. Apart from that, I now know much better in which area I want to work later on, I learnt a different language, mastered loads of difficulties and become more mature.*
- *However, since I made this international volunteer experience immediately after finishing school in my home country, I cannot really tell how my life would have been if I hadn't done this year abroad, because either way my life would have changed at that point of time*
- *I gained a better understanding of different things. And it makes braver to live in a foreign country*
- *It changed me in many ways:*
 - *I got a different perspective about life and the opportunities that i have*
 - *It gave me the chance to interact and know different people from different social class than me*
 - *It made me a more caring and understanding person in different situations*
 - *I learned to be more patience with children too*
- *This experience gave me courage to work with other social projects in my country*

Some of the volunteer's suggestions on how to improve the volunteering experience in the future:

- Volunteers should be properly trained.
- There is absolutely no use in sending someone to a foreign country who has no profession and no idea of the country, the community, the social problems, the history, the politics, the language, cross-cultural experiences, that is just a waste of time and a waste of money.
- In my opinion this question cannot be answered in general, but always depends on the type of volunteer work and of what the aim of the work is. In my case, it was more a learning experience for me than the aid for the community.
- If it was aid for the community, it would be important that there are enough locals who tell the volunteer how to do his work. It is them who know the way their society works; no matter how much experience the volunteer has in his home country. It is absolutely important that the volunteer knows the culture to be able to work efficiently. The same counts for the language skills.
- In order to minimize the negative impact, I'd suggest to seriously choosing future volunteers very carefully. Throughout my experience here unfortunately I had to get to know some volunteers who literally abused the whole idea of volunteer service just to travel through a foreign country. Many others have been skipping work, have not shown any interest in providing their help and have thrown a very bad light on foreign volunteers. I am telling you, choose very carefully (Weltwärts program).
- Provide a platform for celebrating the volunteers, projects and communities achievements from the year
- Help people find basic language courses in their home countries before they start placements
- Use volunteers in an area that they are interested in. There is social work on the street, in projects, with children, with disabled people, with elderly people, or technical assistance in projects, environmental work and so on... Give the possibility to change the area. An unhappy "volunteer" is not good for no one, and it's no more a volunteer
- A lot of people in my country (Germany) are volunteering abroad in order to improve their curriculum, in order to travel or because they want "adventures". These people should definitely NOT be sent abroad.
- When filling out this questionnaire I had the impression that many of the terms used simply don't fit to the kind of volunteer experience I am doing and that they therefore lead to misunderstandings. My project for example is not in the same community as the one I live in. Apart from that, local community easily gives the impression of talking about a small village. However, I live in a town of more than 200 000 inhabitants. Questions like whether I have a long lasting positive impact on the local community are simply not applicable in this case!

2.1.9 Conclusions

The majority of volunteers wanted to help reduce social and economic inequality; they thought they would gain useful skills. They liked the idea of being part of the society, living and travelling abroad without being a tourist. They felt they gained international work experience and language skills. Some felt it was good time to think about their future. It helped them appreciate what they have as well as helping others work towards a better future for everyone.

The types of projects varied a great deal as all the projects have different work objectives, from universal education, teaching, providing better social opportunities and careering for young children. A few worked with promoting gender equality and helping the environment. They helped strength civil society and resolved conflicts through teaching proper behaviour. All of them took part in cross-cultural exchanges.

The volunteers felt their training in the local culture wasn't very thorough. They felt the support from the sending organisation could be better. A majority of volunteers served alongside other international volunteers in their projects, few served with local volunteers and they all lived with host families.

Many of the volunteers felt that ABIC could have organised more activities for the volunteers and between the families/projects and volunteers. They felt they could've been more supportive in organising activities with the volunteers. Most volunteers felt that ABIC could've been in better contact with the communities and projects.

Many of the volunteers felt they didn't have any useful skills to offer the projects, however, they still felt they made a lasting contribution to the projects. A lot of the volunteers felt that the work they did could've been better provided by a full time staff member, however, they felt that if they hadn't done it no-one would've done it. Only 1 volunteer had problems in the community. They felt the language barrier was a big problem in the beginning. Almost all the volunteers wanted to be part of the community and felt they could make a positive difference. The majority are still interested in volunteering and want to continue volunteering when they go back home. Many volunteers had problems with communication in the beginning, many arrived with no knowledge of Portuguese and left speaking with accurate grammatical vocabulary; some were fluent. Some found the cultural differences within their projects community difficult to deal with. They couldn't express their worries and fears as the communities didn't understand them; that was their life and they didn't know any other.

All the volunteers gained a better understanding of a different culture and learned to appreciate their own culture more. They see the world differently with a better understanding of local communities. Many felt this experience would help with future studies and work and a few changed their career ideas during the year. The majority are very pleased with their experiences and felt that it made a dramatic difference to their lives. They are more self-aware and stronger in their self-belief.

2.2 ANALYSIS OF HOST PROJECTS' INPUTS

2.2.1 General Information about Host Organizations

8 organizations participated in the questionnaire.

Project Work Area:

	YES
Community Development	1
Education	3
Family	2
Poverty and Hunger	1
Youth	1

Previous Experience:

In what year did your organization begin hosting international volunteers and how many international volunteers did you received then?

Year:	Number of volunteers:
2008	6
2004	10
N/A	N/A
2006	7
2008	N/A
2010	1
2010	1
1998	7

2.2.2 Motivation

Why did your organization decide to host international volunteers?

- *The main reason is to exchange knowledge and culture. To learn different ways of being and behaving.*
- *Starting from the point of volunteering is a difficult step and important for anyone, we decided to host because help is always welcome in the projects, especially when there is a chance of cultural exchange*
- *The exchange of experiences. It is very important for the children of the community to have these experiences with people of other nationalities, feeding their curiosities and expanding their view of the world*
- *give a volunteer the opportunity to get to know a little about the local(regional) culture, it's habits, customs, origins and also for them to pass on to us a little about their own culture, enriching our work and theirs (exchange of experiences)*
- *Because ABIC found us and wanted to see our project and we agreed to receive international volunteers. We consider this an important experience for the institution and for the wider community*
- *New experiences*

2.2.3 Recruitment

How does your organization get most of your international volunteers?

Most of our international volunteers . . .

	Strongly disagree			Neither agree/ nor disagree			Strongly agree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
...are found through our recruitment efforts (for example, posting volunteer opportunities on websites)	8						
...find us on their own (for example, they hear about us from former volunteers)	8						
...are placed with us by a partner volunteer-sending organization							8
...are placed with us by other kinds of partner organizations (for example, universities, faith groups, etc.)	8						

Do you have any requirements for accepting an international volunteer?

Yes, in most cases, international volunteers must . . .

	Strongly disagree			Neither agree/ nor disagree			Strongly agree
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
...have specific skills (for example, they must be qualified to provide medical care)	2			3	2	1	
... have a certain level of education				2	1	4	1
... be of a certain age				2	2	3	1
...be able to speak one or more local languages	2	3		3			
...submit an application to volunteer with us					1	3	4
...complete an interview to volunteer with us	1				1	3	3
...be qualified in some other way. Please specify:	3		1	4			
We do not have any requirements for our international volunteers	3	1		1	1		2

Other comments:

- *We talk to the volunteer to get to know more about them and their experiences and what they expect to get out of the volunteering work.*
- *We give a list of preferences, we don't require qualifications. But if they have some it helps the institution.*

How long do international volunteers serve with your organization?

	Rarely or never	Occasionally	Almost always
3 to 6 months			1
6 to 12 months			7

2.2.4 Training / Institutional support

How are international volunteers managed at your organization?

	Rarely or never	Occasionally	Almost always
We provide one staff person to organize the international volunteers.			8
We provide several staff people to organize the international volunteers.	6	1	1
The international volunteers manage themselves.	2	5	1

Other comments:

- *There is a coordinator for organising the work process*
- *They have a coordinator to organise and combine the times and activities of the exchanges*
- *They have a project coordinator in the institution where the volunteer works. The development of the activities is conducted together by the volunteer and the coordinator*

How does your organization generally determine projects for international volunteers?

Projects for international volunteers . . .

	Rarely or never	Occasionally	Almost always
...are created by our staff based on what our organization needs.		1	7
...are created by our staff based on community feedback and what our community needs.	5	2	1
...are suggested or proposed by our partner organizations.	4	2	2
...are suggested or proposed by international volunteers themselves.		1	7

Other comments:

- *The projects are created by the organisation together with the volunteers*
- *The coordinator identifies the area of greatest need and/or exploring the abilities of each volunteer and let them choose their activities*
- *We organise project in partnership with the volunteer*

Does your organization offer training to international volunteers?

	Strongly Disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	Neither (4)	(5)	(6)	Strongly Agree (7)
They receive thorough training on their volunteer duties at the beginning.				1	1	3	3
They receive thorough training on the host culture.				1	3	2	2
Volunteers are trained by everyday tasks.						3	5

Other comments:

- *We offer teaching support*
- *There is a orientation period, where the volunteers spend 2 weeks observing the classes and the work develop, this process produces and timetable so that they can develop their own work*
- *Through continuous training which the volunteers participates in alongside the teachers: visiting other institutions, lectures or courses etc.*

2.2.5 Activities and Impact Areas

What are the most common types of projects done by your international volunteers?

	Not applicable (0)	Very Ineffective (1)	(2)	(3)	Neither (4)	(5)	(6)	Very Effective (7)
Providing universal primary education	1				2	1	2	2
Tutoring or teaching children, youth, or adults						1	4	3
Helping community members learn to read, speak, write or understand English or another foreign language	1	1		1	1	3		1
Helping community members learn to read or write in their local language	2				1	3	1	1
Providing economic and social opportunities for youth	1				1	3	2	1
Caring for infants and/or children in a day care facility	2				1		2	3
Promoting gender equality or empowering women and families	4				2	1	1	
Promoting environmental sustainability	3				1	2	2	
Collecting, preparing, or distributing, food, crafts, or other goods	1					1	3	3
Improving management capacity such as fundraising or strategic planning capabilities	4				2	2		
Strengthening civil society	1				1	1	4	1
Promoting crosscultural exchange								8
Supporting conflict resolution and peace						1	2	5

Other comments:

- Projects that they are involved in are art, dance, music, drawing and English language lessons
- If the volunteer has a specific talent/hobby that they wish to teach they can teach this to the members of the projects
- Language lessons, craft, art, computing, Physical education, and helping in other areas
- Teaching English, music and art
- Help the teachers in classes, with projects, events, meeting and trips
- They help run existing projects

2.2.6 Volunteer Impact

What do you think are the potential *benefits* of hosting international volunteers?

International volunteers...

	Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	Neither agree/ nor disagree (4)	(5)	(6)	Strongly agree (7)
...contribute needed skills not found in local staff or volunteers				2	3	2	1
...provide more people to get our work done	1			1		1	5
...provide a new viewpoint or perspective					2	2	4

...provide an opportunity for local people to learn more about other nations and cultures							8
...provide an opportunity for local people to learn more about their own nations and culture				1	2	1	4
...help us attract local volunteers	6	2					
...bring international attention to our work	1	2	3	2			
...bring credibility to our work				1	2	3	2
...are effective						3	5
...help our economy by spending money locally	2		1	2	1	2	
...generate revenue for our organization	6	2					
...become financial donors	7	1					
...become advocates upon return home	1			1	2	4	
...are inexpensive	2					2	4
... volunteer's services could have been more effectively provided by a full-time staff member.	5	2		1			
If the person had not volunteered, a local staff member would have provided these services.	7					1	
...help our organisation develop the relationship with the local community	1			1	2	3	1
...help to intensify networking efforts at national / international level	1			2	3	1	1

Other comments:

- *The exchange of knowledge, culture and experiences that together can move the project forward*
- *There are many. The volunteers help in many areas, a lot of the time they become assigned to particular classes, and so bring their experience, new things that end up attracting everyone and they continue with the activity that they developed, it becomes an important activity, that has to be applied and improved*
- *The benefit is that every year the children can have new experiences with the volunteers. Another benefit is that we don't have to pay because it's difficult for institutions to pay people when they have few resources*
- *Yes, because the volunteer teaches their culture to other people and so the children then learn more about their culture*

What do you think are the potential *challenges* of hosting international volunteers?

International volunteers:

	Strongly disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	Neither agree/ nor disagree (4)	(5)	(6)	Strongly agree (7)
...require a lot of training	3	2		2			1
...require a lot of supervision	2		3	2	1		
...distract staff and local volunteers from the work	7	1					
...are accustomed to different ways of doing things	1			1	2	2	2
...are not always welcome in our community	6	1	1				
...may not have the skills needed	4	2	1	1			
...may not have the language abilities needed	1	1	1	1	1		2
...don't stay long enough	3	1	1		2		1

...can be difficult to find	6		2				
...take the place of local volunteers	8						
...take the place of local jobs	8						
...are not effective	8						
...are expensive	5	2	1				
...create problems inside the community	5	2	1				

If you have had other challenges, please specify how you deal with them.

- *The challenges that arise are those that one would generally expect, the new people always need an adoption period, this is undeniable.*
- *At the beginning you have to be patient and respect their limitation in relation to their verbal communication*
- *Primarily the difficulty is verbal communication with the volunteers*
- *Adapting to our routine and our culture*

In your opinion, based on your answers above, do the *benefits* of hosting international volunteers outweigh the *challenges*?

YES	8
NO	-

Overall, do you think that it is worthwhile for your organization to host international volunteers?

- *In the beginning verbal communication is a problem. Sometimes they experience culture shock*
- *Yes because through them we have a the a wide variety of exchanges of knowledge and culture*
- *Definitely! Because of the cultural exchange and the other benefits they bring (new activities/ideas)*
- *Yes, international volunteers end up taking on certain work that helps us a lot they experience new things with their fellow educators, new stories/memories, intercultural exchange really happens*
- *Yes definitely, as I explained above we only have to thank the volunteers for the help they give us and the teaching experience with them is excellent*
- *It's always worth exchanging ideas, from different countries, cultures and to increase/improve international relations*
- *Because in the future we could send volunteers to other countries to work and/or study*

Do you have any suggestions as to how one could maximize the positive impact, or minimize the negative impact of volunteering?

- *To know before what the volunteers want to achieve and what their objectives are, and for them to know the same about our project so that projects can be organized in advance or more effectively*
- *I believe that a very positive report from the careers of the exchanges in their works*
- *I think that if the volunteers had Portuguese lessons before coming to Brazil it would help a lot with the communication at the beginning and the impact and it would greatly reduce their anxiety*
- *Use Facebook and Twitter more*

Final comments and suggestions:

- *The main objective is that the volunteer always comes willing to learn, continue to be interested and stay committed*
- *We fell that receiving international volunteers is very important for the development of our organisation, it helps the children learn about new and different cultures and countries and allows everyone to learn more about each other*
- *We give a heartfelt thank you for the dedication of the ABIC volunteers in all these years as partners and I hope that we will be in partnerships for many more years to come.*

2.2.7 Conclusions

All of the 8 projects interviewed work with children/youth in social projects; however the objectives differ from project to project. A few of ABIC / ICYE Brazil's projects have been hosting for a number of years. ABIC's regular search for new projects too as can be seen by the various starting dates. A few of the projects are very big and therefore host more than one volunteer a year. Most volunteers arrive in September and this accounts for the high volume of volunteers as they overlap.

The main reason the projects host volunteers is for cultural exchange, giving young people a chance to meet people from, and experience different cultures. It also allows the young people to pass on the culture from their own country, helping them appreciate their customs and culture. All of the projects get their volunteers through ABIC or another partner volunteer organization. A number of projects have specific requests so as to keep their activities running smoothly, others are happy to receive volunteers with new ideas and new skills as seen in the results to the 1st question. Due to the varying types of projects, some require volunteers with qualifications; others say that they only had to have completed high school. A minimum age of 18 is required to take part in the ICYE exchange and most projects also have this age limit. The projects understand that the majority of volunteers don't speak the local language when they arrive; they do their best to facilitate the volunteer in learning the language. Any qualifications, specific skills or talents that the volunteer has, the projects try to facilitate into their timetable.

The majority of volunteers are on long-term 6-12 month placements. They all have a coordinator who is designated to looking after and organizing the volunteers within the project. Usually they work together with the coordinator helping the volunteer realize their ideas. The majority of projects are organized together with the coordinator and the volunteer, either by the volunteer proposing an idea or by the coordinator explaining what the project needs and working together to create a project that meets everybody's needs. Depending on the project the volunteers generally learn their duties through doing them, due to the language barrier it is easier to explain by showing. The volunteers are introduced to the local culture by ABIC and the projects continue the education process throughout the volunteer's time at the project. The projects' objectives vary greatly and therefore the results of the volunteer effectiveness differ from question to question. **One thing they all agree on is the level of intercultural exchange. This is probably one of the most important parts to this program and the main thing that the communities, projects and volunteers all have in common.**

The volunteers bring a number of benefits to the projects they work in, again the main one being cultural exchange. These experiences allow the members of the projects to meet people from outside of Brazil, they get to learn about their own culture and customs through showing them to the volunteer. The volunteers teach or bring new and interesting skills. They are relatively inexpensive and they help the project and the local community builds better relationships. They are also an extra set of hands that can be very necessary as local volunteers are very hard to come by.

The main challenge in hosting international volunteers surprisingly isn't the language barrier but the clashes of culture, being accustomed to doing things in different ways. The language can be learnt but much harder to get accustomed with is the pace and customs of a new country. The projects were unanimous in their views that volunteers were important members of staff (they didn't take job/volunteer opportunities from local people) and that were effective. The cultural exchange; exchange of ideas and experiences, is by far the most valuable thing that the volunteers, projects and communities get out of this experience. Some ideas from the projects included increase communication before the volunteers arrive to help start the volunteer off quicker, more feedback from the volunteer's colleagues, beginners Portuguese lessons before arriving, and better use of social networking.

Over all this report highlights the varying degrees of projects and their different objectives. The projects put a high price on the work the volunteers achieve in their time at the projects. Having visited and seen in person the impact the volunteers have on their projects and in particular the children they work with. I have seen that some of the projects wouldn't function without volunteers, in some projects they are the only educators and therefore without the volunteers the children wouldn't have a structure, they would be able to do whatever they want which isn't the point of these projects. The projects are here to provide meals, extra-curricular activities and a chance to express themselves by learning new skills. The lessons supplement their school learning and provide an additional dimension.

It also brings the outside world closer. Almost all the children and staff that work in the projects have never been outside Brazil, for them the world doesn't really exist.

2.3 ANALYSIS OF HOST COMMUNITIES' INPUTS

Hereafter I present some of the answers received by host families and some people connected to the host projects.

2.3.1 Community Engagement

Do you know why the volunteers come to Brazil?

Because it's a good experience to see a poor community, see and experience another way of life, and work with/for your heart not for money.
To exchange experiences, show your culture and learn about ours. Support and promote the exchange and making of new relationships.
Because they want to.
In exchange for their military service. To see more of the world, to see another side to life, to meet different people.
Something to do with their government.
I believe it is to learn a new language and experience new cultures.
Because of the weather and the people and the culture
To learn new things
To volunteer in social projects
Because Brazil is a beautiful country, with a rich culture and lots of history. Also there are a lot of people/projects that need help from volunteers
I believe it's because of the famous Brazilian culture and happy people, also because of the natural beauty.
I'm not sure but I think it's for the same reasons we go abroad. Learning about another culture, a new language. Brazil is an emerging market with a strong currency, with many job opportunities. They also come to help, and some come because they exchange military service for voluntary work.

Do you know what the volunteers do here? If yes, please explain.

They give attention and affection to children that don't normally have access to it at home, they are only here to help not to gain money.
I believe they come here to increase and build a new reality.
They do everything and anything the community needs them too.
They teach music and IT, they help the teachers and staff
They make up the staff team, support the teachers, organise projects, tidy the classrooms, teach IT, languages, prepare snacks and meals, supervise trips.
To help with the children, this is very important. To help the cooks with meals and snacks. To help supervise the children on trips. Teach English and IT.
They work in social projects.
To learn about international volunteering and apply the newly obtained knowledge and skills in their own countries
To do voluntary work
they work in social education projects in the poor areas of the city
Travel, study and voluntary work
They come to learn Portuguese and to do volunteer work; I know that the German government has incentives to encourage the programme. There are other reasons for other volunteers.

Do you know what the volunteers do in their free time?

Not exactly, I think they go out and eat, see friends etc.
No
They go out with friends.
They teach languages and play rugby.
Read, help their families, and explore the city and surrounding areas.
Spend time with their host families and new friends; some take courses/lessons in new things.
They discover the culture through their host family, work colleagues, and ABIC crew.
Learning about the city, going out with friends, travelling
Enjoy themselves a lot
Seeing and experiencing the country and it's culture, going to parties, meeting friends
Go to parties and travel
They join clubs like choirs, dancing, travel in the state and country.

2.3.2 Volunteer Impact

What was the biggest challenge in receiving an international volunteer?

The language was the most difficult thing to overcome.
None
There was none for me.
The language
I worry about them with some of the more difficult children.
The language.
The fear that he wouldn't be able to adapt to the house rules.
None!
The language barrier
Worrying that you have to reorganise your house and they won't feel comfortable.
Adapting the house and our customs
There weren't many challenges, because I received them with an open heart, ready to accept them into my family. I treated him as a brother. Is it easy to bring someone into your family, It was only the 1 st days that were difficult to confide in them, when you have never met or seen this person in your life.

What was the main benefit in receiving an international volunteer?

They work for free which is important here as we don't have the funds to employ enough staff in the local centres. The exchange of cultures is important to the children and making friends.
There are many benefits: they introduce a new language, they demonstrate another culture, they bring the necessary human resources.
It's important for our community, and the local project.
Making friends and building new relationships with the local people, children and the educators in the projects.
The children here are very demanding, we don't have enough money to employ enough people to support them – volunteers are essential and indispensable.
When they learn our culture, spending time and helping the local children is very important.
Cultural integration, inter cultural exchange
I have a new sister!
The cultural diversity
Making a very good new friend
Exchange of experiences and making great new friends
The connection with other people. We gained 2 new families in Germany from my new brother and his girlfriend. I will go and visit them at Christmas.

What activities did your community/family most enjoy doing with the volunteer?

Giving the children the affection they crave so much. When they meet the children's parents and visit their homes.
The lessons they teach
When they make the snacks.
Being a positive male role model and creating positive personal relationships with the children.
Everything they do, especially the lessons they teach.
Everything.
The process of adapting to our culture and way of life, and when he explained about his home culture
Volunteers give us the chance to talk about/experience our own culture in a new way!
The work they do with the children in the community
Introducing her to our culture, going out, spending time together
Volunteer work, travel with the family
Everything, There are no bad things to do. We didn't do many activities together, my family are simple. We ate lunch and dinner together and did things together with the rest of the family.

Would your community/family like to receive more volunteers? If yes, please explain.

YES! Their work is fantastic.
YES! We are low on human resources to help realise our plans in the way we want and need.
Yes because we need them!
YES!
Yes, we really believe they are really important, they use few resources, the difficult children really need volunteers to help them improve their literacy skills
Yes, because we need the volunteers here and it's a fantastic experience.
Yes, it's great to help people that you know are going to be helping the people that need it the most in our country
Yes, it was an interesting experience to live with a new person
For now I am happy to have helped.
Yes, because was really good and we would like to do it again
Yes, because I think is a very cool experience and there's always more to learn
I would like to. The experience was excellent. I learnt a great deal. Through this you learn to share your space with people you don't know and learn to multi-task. It is a shame that we don't have more space in our home. I would like some privacy for a little while before we receive another volunteer

Comments and final suggestions . . .

I am very thankful to the countries that organise this work.
Congratulations for this initiative. Continue with this project!
They are great, they have a different spirit from the teachers and they help to empower and motivate the staff. They are happy and create and good environment.
It's important that programmes like this continue to grow in our city because it increased the importance of social work here
I want to take part in and support volunteering in Brazil
It was a rich experience
Volunteering was really important to my family: we learnt new things, a new culture and it has made us aware of volunteering in our country.
It would be great to have a meeting and talk more about the culture of the incoming volunteer that we will receive. I would like to have known more about their country and its culture before receiving the volunteer into my house

2.3.3 Conclusions

In Brazil host families are not in the same communities as the projects, ABIC does its best to host volunteers as close as possible or within easy travelling distance to the volunteer's project. I carried out these questionnaires with host families and local people who have some connection with the projects. These results highlight the high turnover of families in Brazil. It is fairly easy to distinguish between the answers from the families and the people connected to the projects. The projects have a much longer history of receiving volunteers. The majority of volunteers in Brazil are on long-term placements of 6-12 months. The responses from the community point of view state that they would like to keep their volunteers for longer, however families generally prefer volunteers to stay for 6 months.

There are many reasons behind choosing to volunteer. These responses demonstrate that the people connected to the volunteer have spoken about it either in detail or in passing and that the motivations vary. It is clear that the volunteers in Brazil make an impact on their families and their projects' community and that their actions are regarded highly. According to the interviewees, the volunteers use their free time to really experience all sides of Brazilian culture. They make Brazil their "home" for 6-12 months and take part in many activities to help them get to know the "real" Brazil.

As expected, one of the main challenges is overcoming the language barrier. This along with the worries about bringing someone new into your home, from a different cultural background and whom you don't know can be stressful and worrying. The obvious main benefit from international volunteering is introducing and learning about new cultures, the international cultural exchange. The activities the volunteers complete with their families and within the communities obviously make a very positive impact. From just being there for the children and giving them the attention they deserve to spending time with the families, eating, travelling and doing this all families do. The negatives highlighted here are the lack of space and families worrying about sharing their personal space with someone they have never met and the cultural differences/conflicts that could arise. Generally the volunteers help open host communities eyes to the culture of volunteering, they bring new languages and customs with them, and share in the lives of their families. Hopefully it encourages the locals to see the benefits of volunteering and maybe even start volunteering or supporting local volunteer initiatives!

2.4 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Motivations

The main motivation for all parties taking part in the volunteer program is the exchange of culture and knowledge. To learn new skills, a new language, experience a new culture and a new country without being a tourist, which is a good challenge.

Host Projects

All the projects that host ABIC volunteers are social programmes working with children and youth, however they all have different objectives. They are generally social educational programmes that complement the schools syllabus as well as covering more general topics like drugs, alcohol and sex. Many of the projects are integrated into the community and run programmes that include the entire family; always with the view to helping the community improve and strengthen their society.

Training

During their on-arrival camp the volunteers are introduced to Brazilian culture and it is generally understood that the projects and families will continue this part of the education. As for the projects, training is usually connected by 'show and copy' and 'learn as you go' due to the difficulties with the language barrier at the beginning. Only one project stated that the volunteers needed a lot of training. Most projects agreed that the volunteers have different views and ideas of how things should be carried out due to differences in culture and customs. However one project mentioned how their different energy helped to boost the morale of the staff. All the volunteers and staff agreed that volunteers do not take jobs or volunteering opportunities from local people.

Cultural immersion and engagement

All the volunteers wanted to be part of the community, however for some, due to the area in which their projects are being unstable they are unable to spend much time there. They felt that the local

community was so different that they couldn't talk about their fears and worries because the locals wouldn't understand. The volunteers felt that the language barrier was difficult in the beginning but this passed as they grasped the language better. One main fear from the communities and projects was that the volunteer wouldn't understand and adhere to the rules and regulations because of the cultural differences. They all felt that the exchange of culture was enriching, ending in the acceptance of the volunteer into the community, project and family.

Activities and Impact

As mentioned before all the projects are based around informal education. One thing the volunteers give is the love and affection the children crave and deserve and need in their lives. Some of the volunteers do fundraising activities to raise money to buy winter clothes and supplies for the children and projects.

Host coordinating organisation and host families

The majority of the volunteers feel that ABIC could have organised more activities for the volunteers and for the volunteers and the communities and families. The volunteers gave mixed responses in regards to ABIC and the support it gave to volunteers in organising activities. Generally the volunteers feel that the communication between ABIC, projects and families could be improved.

Volunteer Impact

It is interesting to see the responses from the projects and the volunteers. The projects feel that the volunteers bring something new to the projects, be it a specific skill or manpower, they have new ideas, a new perspective and a new energy. The projects feel that the volunteers are very effective and half the volunteers felt they had made a lasting contribution. The volunteers and the projects agree that without the volunteers the jobs that the volunteers completed wouldn't have been done. The projects felt that the volunteers initiated new cultural experiences both national and international allowing the children to learn a new culture as well as learning more about their own culture.

Perceptions of Change

All the volunteers felt they increased their appreciation of a different culture through increased cultural, environmental and leisure activities. They have changed the way they see the world in general and especially their own country and culture. Many felt this experience would help them with work and studies in the future and for a few it changed their career ideas completely. The majority are very happy with the experience and felt that it had made a positive change to their lives. They are more self-aware and appreciative and grateful for what they have.

Suggestions for Improvements

Many of the volunteers felt that the selection process for volunteers could improve to limit the number of people whose goals are not in line with ICYE's ideals. They also felt that language courses before arrival would really help. The majority of volunteers felt that they got a lot more out of this experience than they gave. All the projects and communities and most families were willing and ready to receive another volunteer as they feel the experience is so enriching for everyone involved. Inter cultural exchange is such a rewarding experience and the benefits definitely outweigh the challenges.