

EYV 2011 - VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

Impact of Youth Volunteering in South Africa

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'Youth in Action' Programme



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1 Overview of Volunteering in South Africa

Civic Service Policy in South Africa

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) set the intention and the commitment of the government to establish a society based on democratic values, fundamental human rights and social justice. As a consequence, so far all the national policies have been informed by a **social development approach** aiming at reshaping the political, socio-economic environment through community transformation, broad engagement of society and equal redistribution of resources. [1]

As many of the sector government policies, civic service has been deeply changed in its aims, structure and target groups since the end of the apartheid; in democratic South Africa the service is now responding to the national reconstruction, citizenship development and social cohesion. Therefore, it seems that the civil service has benefiting from “*an enabling policy environment in the post-apartheid South Africa and supported by national policy and legislation*”. [2]

Understanding and perception of the civic service

According to a research conducted by Perold, Carapinha & Mohamed in 2006 [3], the concept of service and volunteering have an intuitive sense for the people interviewed (mainly, servers). The main reason of the widespread understanding of the service in the South African society is due to the fact that it is closely anchored to the traditional philosophical concept of **ubuntu**. The ubuntu philosophy goes by the importance of caring and sharing and a deep feeling of interdependency inside the community. “*Our heritage as Africans is about returning to the community ... you helped me grow; I will help you grow as well*”. [4]

Nationally structured service programmes

There are four programs that can be grouped under the South African Civic Service: Youth National Service, Service Learning in Higher Education, Community Service for Health Care Professionals and Community Service into Senior Secondary School. All four are **formal and national** in scope and combine learning and service delivery to different extent. The majority are based on voluntary participation. The programs involve specific target groups and are implemented in several fields; each of them is guided by their own rules and legislation, but all are underpinned by the same goals: serving the community, building awareness and sense of citizenship for young people, empowering the participants.

Informal service at community level and in non-governmental sector

Volunteering in South Africa seems to be a varied landscape because of the different context and forms of implementation. Volunteering is implemented in several areas, such as human rights, health, community development, economic development, environmental protection and it can take several forms, more or less structured, and supported by government institutions. From a general perspective, volunteering in South Africa is not regulated by a uniform national policy. Aside from the civic service programs, volunteer management is more likely to be based on different rules and policies according to the operating sector (i.e., safety and security, childcare, etc.) and the respective department. Similarly, there is no a univocal definition of volunteering and of the role of volunteer since the legal framework is extremely fragmented or non-existent, especially for those organizations that engage volunteers outside any specific program. In this case, stakeholders, research bodies and volunteering organizations have, over the years, been trying to stress the importance of setting up an accountability and protection system that would regulate the relationship between organizations that benefits from the service and volunteers.¹

International Volunteering

A research conducted by VOSESA in 2010/2011[1], shows that international volunteering that involves people from Western countries in Southern African Community Development (SADC) region is “*a widespread and growing phenomenon*” and it therefore deserves attention in terms of the impact it can

¹ The issue of the role that volunteers may have on strengthening the accountability of the organizations where they do their service has been approached in a workshop organized by UNV and IAVE. To know more about the content of the conference, see: CRONIN K., *Do volunteers strengthen NGO accountability?*, June 14, 2007, available at: <http://www.unv.org/en/perspectives/doc/do-volunteers-strengthen-ngo.html>

have on the hosting organization and overall community development. Although at the moment precise data on the scale of international volunteers in Southern Africa is not available (neither specific surveys focusing on South Africa), it has been demonstrated that a great number of volunteer organizations send volunteers to this region every year.²

International Volunteers Agencies in South Africa

There are many international volunteer agencies and organizations operating in South Africa through partnerships with local organizations, government departments, and local offices.

The largest international volunteer programs in South Africa are:

United Nations Volunteers (UNV): The UNV establish its South Africa office in 1994, shortly after the fall of the apartheid with the aim to support the government with the achievement of the developmental goals set up from the new democracy.

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO): VSO is a British based charity organization whose programs in South Africa mainly focus on HIV/AIDS.

US Peace Corps: The program has been established in South Africa in 1997. The operating sectors are HIV/AIDS awareness, health and education.

German Weltwärt: German International Service agency is one of the volunteering agencies mostly present in South Africa as a volunteer sending organization.

International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE): is an international non-profit youth exchange organization that work in 40 countries around the world and provide people with opportunity to volunteering abroad (short and long-term projects) and have intercultural experience. The Volunteer Centre in Cape Town is the South African ICYE associate member.

Canada World Youth (CWY): The Canadian organization is operating in South Africa with two youth programs; Youth Leader in Action and Global Learner. Both the programs are informed by the purpose of the youth exchange.

Restless Development (formerly Students Partnership Worldwide): The South African branch of the international organization is a youth-led developmental agency with the goal to place youth at the forefront of development. The organization is intended to be a response to the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on young South Africans and the lack of preventative health interventions and information in the rural communities.

Skillshare International: It is a volunteer developmental international organization that offers people the chance to participate to international volunteering program (short and long-term) by collaborating and networking with local organizations, communities and government departments.

There are other international agencies and NGOs operating in the development cooperation field in South Africa involving professionals, volunteers and professional volunteers such as:

Care International, Oxfam International, Medecins sans frontieres (Doctors without Borders), Africare, Earthwatch Institute, Worldtech, Engineer Without Borders, UNICEF, UNAIDS.

According to website GoAbroad there are nearly 142 organisations offering a total of 463 volunteer programs and internships in South Africa.³

² Initially the research involved 201 northern volunteer sending organizations and the response rate was of 30%. That means that 61 organizations responded to the survey; from the results collected the survey show that 89.1 % of the respondents sent volunteers to African countries. 61 respondents were from the following countries: Germany (27), United Kingdom (9), France, (5), Switzerland (4), Canada (3) Ireland (2), United States (2), Norway (2), South Africa (2), South Korea (1), Finland (1) Hungary (1), Ghana (1) and New Zealand (1).

³To have an exhaustive list of all the organizations dealing with volunteering projects in South Africa, see: <http://www.goabroad.com/volunteer-abroad/search/south-africa/volunteer-abroad-1>

2 Action Research

Note on methodology

The survey has been conducted through visits to the hosting organizations (Volunteer Centre's partners) that usually hosted in the past or have been hosting international volunteers. The questionnaire sample (for hosting organizations, international volunteers and host community) has been edited and slightly changed to adjust them to local needs and circumstances.

Achievements: Visiting hosting projects has provided the survey an in-depth view of South African civil society structures and the pitfalls and successes of non-profits organisations in terms of sustainability and impact in the local communities. This also served to enrich the survey through a personal and human perspective.

Challenges: An effort to reach other organizations (other than Volunteer Centre's partners) in and outside Cape Town was done but without success. A more general questionnaire sample was set up in order to get information from South African non-profit organisations about the political and social context in which they operate and an assessment of the volunteers impact on their work environment, but, as said the effort did not produce any results. The same challenge was faced when approaching former international volunteers and hosting organizations (persons in charge of monitoring and supervising international volunteers) *via* e-mail. Therefore, the survey has been conducted purely on personal visits and this has had positive aspects (as mentioned above) but has also hampered the chance to involve as many actors as possible. Thus, it was not possible to provide an outlook on how international voluntary service affected the life of former volunteers.

Note: as to the open questions, answers have been summarized. Each statement is followed by a number that does not correspond to the percentage of the respondents but to the physical person who spontaneously made the statements. When the respondents listed more than one statement, that single opinion has been divided into a separate statement. It follows that the total does not correspond to the overall number of the respondents.

2.1 ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTEERS' INPUTS

2.1.1 General Information about Volunteers

From the collected data on international volunteers, it follows that **60% are female** and **40% male**. With regard to their age, there is an overwhelming participation of very young people in international volunteering programs; in fact, **95% is between 18 and 25 years old** (70 % is between 18 and 21 and 25% between 22 and 25). Only 1 out of 20 (in all 5%) is older than 25 years. As to the provenance of the volunteers, **70% of them are from Canada** and a **30% from Europe** (Germany, Italy and Switzerland).

- **Previous Volunteering Experience**

60% of the interviewed had been involved in volunteering activities in their own country before starting their service in South Africa and 40% do not have any kind of volunteering experience. Only 35% of the interviewed had previous experience in volunteering in a foreign country (country different from their own).

- **Types of Voluntary Service in South Africa**

70% of the international volunteers have been doing their service within the framework of the Youth Exchange Program and internship programs run by the Canada World Youth in partnership with the Volunteer Centre (30% of volunteers are interns and 40% are participants in the exchange program).

30% of the international volunteers are from other voluntary service programs (20% from the German International Civil Service/ Weltwärts and 10% from European Voluntary Service).

- **Project Work Area**

Area of voluntary work	Number of volunteers involved per area
HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, domestic violence awareness programs	7 (35%)
Children with cerebral and physical disabilities	6 (30%)
Abused women and children/ Abandoned kids	5 (25%)
Primary school	1 (5%)
Mental Health	1 (5%)

- **Tasks implemented by international volunteers at the work placement**

Tasks	Activities
Administration	Organizing library, setting up database, etc.
Educational and leisure activities for kids, seniors and mentally challenged adults	Wheelchair and basketball, art class, horse riding, after-school program, assistance during school lessons, etc.
Supervision of other volunteers	Assisting and supporting other volunteers with their tasks
Raising awareness	Visiting local community members and community events to provide information on issues like HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and domestic violence
Physiotherapy	Helping disabled kids with physiotherapy and exercises
Children Care	Giving practical support to kids, i.e. feeding kids

- **Accommodation**

85% of the volunteers lived in a host family and only 15% stayed in a hostel located at the hosting placement.

2.1.2 Motivation

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
I want just be useful and help others				3	8	9
I thought that the volunteer experience would give me skills useful in school or in a job.		1		3	11	5
I had a desire to make a difference by helping others.			1	5	4	10
I needed a job.	10	6	2	2		
I was required to volunteer as part of a course requirement.	10	3	3	1	1	2

I wanted to make friends and meet people.			1	3	10	6
I wanted to gain international experience and language skills.				1	6	13
Other	<i>-volunteering make days of life happier</i> <i>- as an intern I was motivated to build on what I have learned during my degree</i> <i>- play music with other community</i>					

With regard to volunteers' motivations in participating in an international voluntary service program, an overwhelming part of them (85% of the respondents) stated they wanted to feel useful and simply to be of help to other people. It seems that very often young people are moved by the desire to make a difference in the world and to feel active in bringing about positive change like 74% of the volunteers stated. In no case, volunteers engaged themselves in volunteering activities because of unemployment or the need for a job, as 90% of the interviewees did not consider this a relevant reason. At the same time, volunteers very often volunteer abroad as a means to gain skills that could be useful to them in the future, for their career or educational path, which was stated by 80% of the interviewed. The fact that such an experience is seen as a means to improve knowledge and raise the educational profile of the participants can be taken from the overwhelming percentage of the interviewed (95%); they stated a willingness to gain an international experience and acquire new language skills. Very often volunteer decide to apply for international voluntary program to make friends and get to know new people as stated by 84% of the volunteers.

- **Personal understanding of volunteering**

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
An act of civil responsibility			2	5	11	2
A spontaneous feeling of solidarity			4	8	4	4
A way to feel useful			3	3	10	4
A way to get new skills			1	1	10	8
A way to improve myself				1	10	9
A life-style		1	3	6	8	2

65% of the volunteers believe volunteering to be an act of civil responsibility. For 20 % volunteering it is not just a feeling of solidarity, while 40% believes it is. Most of them (70%) stated that they do volunteer work because it is a way to feel useful. From the preferences expressed, it seems that almost all the respondents (90%) see volunteering as means and an opportunity to acquire new skills. Similarly, volunteering is strongly perceived as way of self-improvement and personal change; it can be taken from the 95% who attest to this feeling. Half of the interviewed said that volunteering to them is a lifestyle. The other half (50%) didn't have the same opinion or could decide on neither a positive nor a negative answer.

2.1.3 Training/ Institutional Support

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
I received thorough training on the host culture.		1	10	5	3	1
I received thorough training on my volunteer duties at my project.	1	7	6	4	1	1
Sending organization staff supported me well before and throughout my volunteer placement.			4	5	9	2
Local staff supported me well throughout my volunteer placement.		4	4	6	4	2
I was provided with additional training throughout my stay in SA		4	7	4	5	

With regard to the preparation provided, often volunteers do not get satisfying information about the culture of the hosting country from both sending and hosting organizations, which was stated by 55% of the interviewed. 20% has been trained on the cultural background of South Africa, while 25% did not decide on a positive or negative measure of the training received on the host culture. However, volunteers often receive good and thorough support from their sending organization before and during the service (stated by 55% of the interviewed). As to the initial orientation at the work placement, very often volunteers felt they did not receive thorough training and tasks' orientation (65% of the respondents), while only 10% expressed satisfied with the preparation they got. With regard to the support received from the local staff during the service, 40% said they did not get appropriate assistance, as against 30% who rate support from local staff highly. During the service, 55% of the volunteers did not receive additional training and only 25% state they got additional training.

Some suggestions and comments from international volunteers:

1) Preparation before service (sending organization)

- the preparation should be more specific and focus on information about the country, culture, project and community
- preparation should be shorter
- it is useful to deal with culture shock and make volunteers aware of it

2) Preparation at the Arrival (host coordinating organization)

- preparation should focus more on an in-depth outlook of the socio-economic and cultural aspect of South Africa
- it is good to have orientation camp outside the project site, in a relaxing and enjoyable environment

3) Preparation during the service (host coordinating organization)

- provide more cultural orientation, excursions and an appropriate language training

4) Preparation during the service (host organization/work placement)

- the organization should provide volunteers with more specific and detailed tasks descriptions and have a schedule for the activities to be run by the volunteers
- the organization should provide volunteers with better preparation and tools to enable them to do the work adequately

2.1.4 Challenges

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
Communication problems due to the language		5	7	3	2	3
Difficulties to adapt yourself to different cultural context		4	7	6	2	1
Lack of material support from hosting organization		1	3	3	11	2
Lack of communication with hosting organization		3	3	3	5	6
Problems with host families	4	6	2	4	2	2

For 60% of the volunteers language did not represent a problem while 25% stated that this was a challenge affecting the quality of the communication with local people. As to potential problems related to the way volunteers fit into the new country, it seems that international volunteers seldom face challenges to adapt to a different cultural context (as stated by 55% of the interviewed). 15% felt that cultural differences are a challenge, while 30% didn't agree or disagree. Often volunteers also seem to be affected by unsatisfactory material support from the hosting organization, as 65% of the interviewed felt it a challenge, as against 20% that said they get the needed material support.

More than half of the people interviewed (55%) faced lack of communication with the hosting organization as one of the challenges during their voluntary experience. 30% are quite satisfied with the communication with the hosting organization. In most cases (60% of the interviewed), international volunteers did not face particular challenges in terms of living with a host family, while 20% had some problems in this respect.

2.1.5 General Impact

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
I had specific skills needed by the host organization	2	1	5	7	2	3
I transferred useful skills to the host organization			4	10	4	2
I made a lasting contribution to the host organization or community members	1		1	8	9	1
I provided money or other physical resources to the host organization or community members.	3	1	3	6	5	2
My services could be more effectively provided by full-time staff members.	1	1	2	8	8	
If I had not volunteered, a local	1	5	7	3	3	1

staff member would have provided these services.						
My presence in the community may have caused some problems.	2	5	10	3		
My presence have aroused curiosity about my country and my culture in the community	1		1	3	10	5

In terms of the impact of the volunteers on the host organizations, 25% of the interviewed believe they have specific skills needed by the host placement, while 40% do not feel that, and 35% could not say whether they agree with it or not. This is confirmed by the fact that 50% of the volunteers could not say if they transferred useful skills to the organization, 20% did not provide any specific skills to staff and local volunteers, as against 30% that said they did. With regard to the material and financial support given by the volunteers to the organization, 35% provided it to host placement, as against 35% who did not. Half of the volunteers believe they made a lasting contribution to the host organization or to the community members (50%), as against 40% of the interviewed that could neither agree or disagree, and 10% that think that their contribution cannot be evaluated as lasting. 40% of the volunteers think that a full time staff member could have effectively provided the service that he/she provided at the hosting placement. Only 20% of the volunteers think that the service was well provided according to their voluntary work schedule.

The previous assessment is somehow confirmed by the fact 65% of the volunteers stated that their job wouldn't be done from other local staff. The 20% think that there are local human resources that would be able to do the work they have done at the organization. As to their impact on the local community, none of the respondents gave negative measures, as demonstrated by the 85% who stated that their presence didn't cause any problem. It follows that very often the presence of international volunteers leads to a certain curiosity within local community members about their culture and country, which was stated by 75% of the volunteers.

Comments of the volunteers about the impact on the host organization:

- *one of the best things that a volunteer can do when working with kids is to make them feel supported and respected*
- *sometimes volunteers feel their job is not necessary but recognized the importance of giving clients (kids) new inputs, for instance, by creating their own personal projects that involve both clients and staff*
- *some volunteers felt their skills have not been properly used or felt underestimated in what they could contribute to the organization*
- *it is advisable to the work placement to assign jobs taking more into account the skills and preferences of volunteers*

2.1.6 Personal Impact

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
It affected my ethnic, faith or religious identity.	4	7	2	2	5	
I was exposed to new ideas and ways of seeing the world.			1		12	7
It affected the way of thinking of my own National identity and my country			1	3	14	2

It increased my social and communication skills			2	2	11	5
It increased my professional skills		1	5	4	8	2
It increased my sense of self esteem and confidence in my abilities		1	1	1	15	2
It increased my trust in others	1		5	12	2	
It increased my adaptability				1	11	8

With regards to the overall perception of the change perceived by the volunteers, in most cases (65%) they don't feel that this experience affected somehow their ethnic, faith or religious identity. 25% of them think that their voluntary service did not in any way change their identity and 10% could not say whether they feel changed in this sense or not. Very often getting in touch with a new culture allows volunteers to re-think their national identity and see their country from different perspective (as stated by 80% of the volunteers). Very often, international voluntary service enables volunteers to improve their social and communication skills, as 80% of the interviewed stated, as against 10% who feel that their social abilities have not improved in that sense. It seems that in most cases volunteers perceived the positive impact of their experience in their personal growth. It revealed through the 75% who stated that their self-esteem increased as well as their confidence in their abilities. As for relationships, 60% of the volunteers cannot say if the experience increased their trust in other people; 25% didn't feel more trustful of other people after this experience while only 10% agreed. Finally, it seems that for almost volunteers, the service abroad increased their adaptability (95%).

Comments and observation of the volunteers:

- *the experience at the host placement make volunteer to do a lot of self-reflecting and raise its self-awareness*
- *for volunteers who came to South Africa shortly after their high school diploma (very young volunteers) the voluntary service can have a great and unique impact on their lives.*
- *the kind of accommodation provided to the volunteer, for instance, in a hostel, can represent an hindrance to the self-expression of the volunteers (because of the rules established at the placement)*
- *a way to express itself at the work project is to set up own aims and achieve them; sometimes it takes time and volunteers meet unexpected challenges to make the heir plans work out but at the end they manage and they feel satisfied and fulfilled in their ability to express themselves at work*
- *it seems to be easy to express oneself in the interaction and relationships with clients (like kids) but sometimes it is hard during through structured and organized activities mainly because of the lack of organization and support offered by the work placements*
- *the language, as well as problems in communication, is an hindrance to the self-expression of volunteers at the work placement.*

• Impact on future plans

70% of the volunteers stated that international voluntary service definitely influenced their plan for the future, be it concerning the university studies, job and carrier choice.

Suggestions on how to improve voluntary programs:

- *To give volunteers the chance to choose the kind of accommodation (i.e. make it optional to live in a host family)*
- *To improve communication systems between hosting coordinating organization and volunteers*
- *The host organization should provide more support and assistance to volunteers*
- *The volunteer should receive more specific and detailed task descriptions at the work placement*
- *Improving time-management at the work placement*
- *Ensuring more accurate communication and exchange of information between the sending and hosting organization on the role and the tasks of volunteer*
- *More appropriate orientation and training for volunteers at the work placement*

- *Consulting with volunteers on volunteer contracts, allowing them to negotiate some parts of it and giving them more say in transport, housing and food decisions.*
- *Providing volunteers with more detailed and specific information on the country and project before they leave for their host country*
- *For the EVS program, it would be advisable to review the pocket money amount for South Africa and increase it in accordance with the actual costs of living in the country*
- *It would be advisable that hosting organization take more care of every single volunteer*

2.2 ANALYSIS OF HOST PROJECTS' INPUTS

2.2.1 General Information

The survey involved 10 hosting organizations that have been hosting international volunteers within the framework of several voluntary and internship programs. The organizations are based in different areas of Cape Town, like Khayelitsha, Athlone and Woodstock⁴.

All these organization provide service to the community in the field of community development, education and poverty. Specifically, they deal with abused women, neglected and abandoned children, children with cerebral and physical disabilities, youth and HIV/AIDS issues. The services provided include educational and recreations activities, raising awareness, childcare, psychological and material support, life-skills and professional training for unemployed.

- ***Previous experience with international volunteers***

Experience in years

10% of the organizations have been hosting for one year
 30% for 4 years
 20% for 5 years
 10% for 14 years

Number of volunteer hosted so far

20% have hosted 4 volunteers
 10% - 6 volunteers
 10% - 10 volunteers
 10% - 12 volunteers
 10% - 24 volunteers
 20% - 30 volunteers
 10% - 86 volunteers

2.2.2 Motivation

- *The organization was contacted by the Volunteer Centre and asked for volunteers work placement (1)*
- *international volunteers bring expertise needed by the organization (4)*
- *volunteers can teach the children the English language (1)*
- *because of lack of funding to pay extra staff and, at the same time, to give unemployed people the opportunity to acquire skills (1)*
- *because the organization needs support (2)*
- *international volunteers give organizations the chance to network with the world outside (1)*

4 Because of the history and the peculiar racial and social features of the city, each community of each area has its own strong identity. Khayelitsha is one of the biggest township (informal settlement) of South Africa and is predominantly a black and Xhosa speaking community. Athlone is a basically a coloured and Muslim community and is located in what is called the Cape Flat area. Woodstock is the closest area to the city centre. To different extent, social issue, like poverty and crime, affects all the communities.

2.2.3 Recruitment

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
Most of the international volunteers are found through our recruitment efforts (for example, posting volunteer opportunities on websites)	2	1	5		2	
They find us on their own (for example, they hear about us from former volunteers)	1	1	3	1	3	1
They are placed with us by a partner volunteer-sending organization					1	9
They are placed with us by other kinds of partner organizations (for example, universities, faith groups, etc.)	1	1	3	1		4

It seems that very seldom hosting organizations recruit international volunteers on their own initiatives, as stated by 80% of the respondents, as against 20% that undertake recruitment efforts, for example, by posting opportunities on websites or undertaking other marketing activities. The respondents receive international volunteers through the recruitment done by a partner volunteer – sending organization (among these, by the Volunteer Centre). 40% get volunteers also through other kind of partner organizations (like, faith groups, universities) or have been approached by the volunteers themselves.

Comments

- *the organization is satisfied with the selection because of the good level of expertise and education and the kind of skills owned by volunteers*
- *the organization is satisfied because of the positive attitude and the passion showed by volunteers in their work at the organization*
- *the work placement should have more say in the screening process done by the sending partner organizations*
- *in some other instances, volunteering has been considered to be “good” for some youngster who was having difficulties in their own life so the organization ended up with these personal problems and that affected the work of the organization*

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
Have specific skills and competences	1	1	1	1	6	
Have a certain level of education	1	1	2	1	4	1
Have previous experience in volunteering	3	1		2	3	1
Be able to speak one or more local languages	3		2		5	
Show a particular interest in the area of work	1			3	3	3
No requirements	1	6	2	1		

In terms of requirements, it seems that, in almost all cases, organizations have at least one or few to requirements when accepting volunteers in their organizations. 60% of the respondents require the volunteer to have specific skills and competence or show a particular interest in the area of work, as against 30% that think that it is not so relevant to set specific selection criteria or cannot say whether it is relevant that volunteers have a strong or previous interest in the social issues. 50% feel that volunteers should have a certain level of education, as against 40 % who do not think this may affect the volunteers' contribution to the both community and organization. With regard to previous volunteering experience, 40% see it as a requirement while another 40% do not. Half of the respondent (50%) rated linguistic competence highly. The rest 50% do not see language as a barrier or a problem.

- **Duration of the volunteers projects**

Most of the organization usually host international volunteers from 1 to 3 months and sometimes from 4 to 7 months. Only few engage volunteers for a period that goes from 8 months to 1 year and none of them host volunteers for over 1 year.

Evaluations and considerations on the duration of programs:

- *the organization prefer to involve long-term projects volunteers because the longer they stay the more they became familiar with the organization and staff and have the chance to develop their own project according to their interests*
- *the organization is satisfied with the volunteers three months stay*
- *the organizations prefer them to stay longer because the clients (children) get to love them and really enjoy to stay with them*
- *the organization would like to have volunteers to stay longer to have the chance to transfer to them more skills and learning*
- *the organization state longer projects are better because enable them to assess the impact of volunteers' work in the organization*
- *the organization believe longer project allow volunteers to get more confident with the new environment and context*
-

2.2.4 Training/Institutional Support

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
Material support in sorting out practical problems	1	1		2	4	2
Advices and suggestions through regular meeting organized in order to assess how the volunteer is going	1			1	6	2
Language support through language classes	4	2	3			1
Providing training on their volunteer duties at the beginning.	1			3	5	1
Providing with additional trainings throughout the project's duration	1	2	2	3	1	1

In terms of support provided to the international volunteers at the work placement, it is more common for the organization to assist them in sorting out practical issues and to offer material support, as against 20 % that do not provide this kind of assistance and 20% that is unsure about this statement. Similarly, very often staff or volunteers (80%) who are in charge of monitoring and supervising

international volunteers provide to them moral support and advice during informal meeting, as against 20% who do not. With regard to training on work duties, organizations often orientate volunteers, as can be taken from the 60 % of the respondents that provide work orientation at the beginning of the service. 30% do not provide training but rather just show the work that needs to be done (stated by 40%). As to the training of volunteers during the service, it seems that in most of the cases they receive preparation only at the early stage but not throughout the project's duration. That can be deducted from 50% of the response that that they do not provide ongoing trainings. Almost all the interviewed (90%) do not or cannot offer language training; only one out of 10 offer this service to volunteers.

Note: Only one organization out of 10 provide board and lodging to volunteers in their organization/school's hostel. Another one is willing to provide language training but is not currently able to do that because of the shortage of resources.

2.2.5 Activities and Impact Areas

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
Educative and teaching activities				1	6	3
Leisure activities	1			2	6	1
Artistic activities and workshops	1	1		2	5	1
Advocacy and Awareness	2	2		2	3	1
Fundraising	1	2	1	3	1	2
Communication and Marketing	2	2	1	2	1	2
Assistance and non material support	3			2	1	4
Other	<i>- although not required to do fund raising, some volunteers have raised funds on their own for a specific project</i> <i>- different and diverse tasks at the same time</i>					

With regards to the kind of tasks implemented by volunteers at the work placements, it seems that, in almost all cases, volunteers are involved in educational and teaching activities (90%) and very often in organizing and taking part to leisure activities for and with the clients (70%). Often volunteers run workshops or set up artistic activities with the clients, as stated by 60% of the respondents, while 20% stated this does not happen at their work placement. 40% of volunteers also run or support awareness programs and undertake advocacy tasks, as against 40% who are not supposed to do this kind of job. Sometimes volunteers raise funds for the organization (in most cases on their own initiative) as stated by 30% of the interviewed; 40% disagree with this. Half of the respondents (50%) stated their volunteers do not cover communication and marketing tasks, while in 30% of the cases they do. Besides the formal tasks established by the organization for volunteers, it seems that quite often (stated by 50%) volunteers provide staff and clients with material and non material support, while 20% of the respondents are unsure about it, and 30% consider that not relevant in terms of volunteers' duties.

2.2.6 Volunteer Impact

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
Volunteers are always supported by internal staff					6	4
Volunteer work independently after the orientation period	1		1	2	4	2
Volunteer are allowed to develop their own projects at the organization			1	3	5	1
Volunteers work alongside other international or local volunteers				1	7	2

In running their tasks at the work placement, it seems that international volunteers are always supported by internal staff, as stated by 100% of the respondents and almost always they work alongside other local or international volunteers (90% of the organization confirm this aspect). In terms of support, in 60% of the work placements, volunteers are enabled to work independently after a first stage orientation and to develop their own projects during their service for the benefit both of the organization and clients (60%). Only 20% of the organizations do not allow volunteers to operate autonomously and just one organization out of 10 does not allow volunteers to develop new projects.

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

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
Contribute needed skills not found in local staff or volunteers		1		1	6	2
Provide an opportunity for local people to learn more about other nations and cultures		1			7	2
Help us attract local volunteers	2			2	5	1
Are effective				1	8	1
Become financial donors	4	3		3		
Give help without an economic compensation				1	5	4
Provide more people to get our work done				1	6	3
Their presence is a stimulus to host community and local volunteers			1	1	5	3

Very often international volunteers bring new skills to the organizations not found in local staff or local volunteers, as stated by 80% of the respondents. Similarly, 90% of the organizations benefit from the effectiveness of volunteers' services. It seems that none of the organizations consider involving international volunteers as potential donors. That can be taken from 70% that do not take into account this possibility and 30% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. However, with regard to the impact of the volunteers' work on the financial sustainability and the operating effectiveness of the

organization, almost all the respondents seem to benefit from voluntary service as unpaid work and as a means to help more people to get work done (90% of the respondents). All the organizations interviewed, assess very good impact of international volunteers' presence in the local community, as stated by 80% who consider it a stimulus for the community and 90% who see it as an opportunity for local people to learn about their cultures and country. Similarly, very often organizations benefit from international volunteer involvement in terms of recruiting local help, as stated by 70% of the respondents.

Benefits to the local community:

- *international volunteers sometimes are a stimulus for local volunteers to look outside their own country to give a helping hand in other parts of the world*
- *international volunteers foster spirit of collaboration among local volunteers and staff*
- local volunteers may be inspired to see the hard work done by the international volunteers. They would get to learn and appreciate voluntary work

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

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
Require a lot of training	2		4	3	1	
Require a lot of supervision			4	2	4	
Are not focused on the mission of the organizations	1	4		4	1	
Don't understand the host community's needs		2	3	4	1	
Don't stay long enough			2	2	6	
Are not always welcome in our community	1	1	5	2		1
May not have the skills needed	1	1	5	1	2	
Other	<i>- volunteers seem to be sometimes not aware of the safety problem we have in SA</i> <i>- sometimes language might be a problem</i>					

In terms of potential challenges in dealing with international volunteers, an overwhelming percentage of the interviewed (90%) do not think they need lots of training and do not consider this a potential challenge. Only one out of 10 considers preparation as a problem. 40% stated that volunteers require a lot of supervision, as against 40% who do not spend much time in monitoring them. 50% of the respondents think that volunteers are usually well focused on the mission of the organizations and have a right understanding of the needs of the community. Often organizations face challenges due to short-term voluntary service, as stated by 60% of the respondents, as against 20% who do not think the short stay may have negative implications. As to organizations' perception of the potential challenge of international volunteers' presence in the local community, it seems that in most cases (70% of respondents) they are welcomed in the host community. 20% state that they cannot say whether they may be refused by the community or not and 10% that they experienced some challenges. Finally, very seldom organization see the lack of skills needed as a potential challenge, as can be taken from 70% of the responses, as against 20% who thinks it might be, and 10 % who could not assess the shortage of skills as a pitfall for the organization.

- *there are instances where the volunteer breaks the rules of the host organization and does not respond to requests to comply, e.g. abusing the accommodation provided or drug and alcohol abuse. In this case, the organization has requested the recruiting volunteer organization to repatriate them.*
- *sometimes volunteers want to change the agreement on tasks description.*

Overall Assessment

All the hosting organizations feel that international volunteers provide more benefits than challenges for their organizations.

Some reasons to continue hosting international volunteers:

- *international volunteers may give us a different perspective and new input on how to sort out some issues affecting South Africa i.e. by providing examples from their own countries*
- *international volunteers fill in gaps in terms of skills and bring new technology*
- *some of the services which international volunteers start or help with remain a benefit for all clients and continue to be run in the future too.*

Suggestions on how to maximize the positive impact of international volunteering:

- ⤴ *volunteers should be taught better about the meaning of volunteering*
- ⤴ *volunteers should spend more hours per day at the work placement*
- ⤴ *volunteers' project durations should be longer*
- ⤴ *volunteers should be better informed about safety and security issues by the recruiting partner organizations*
- ⤴ *volunteers should be provided with more detailed information about the work placement in order to have realistic expectations*
- ⤴ *volunteers should be provided with language preparation whenever needed*
- ⤴ *It would be advisable for recruiting sending organization to match the interests of the volunteers with the scope of the organization to make it easier for them to find an area where they can fit in or develop their own projects to benefit of both the clients and themselves*

Final comments and suggestions:

- *Having volunteers can help with the work load of the staff members, while learning something at the same time.*
- *Sometimes it is a big job to organize all the volunteers so that both host and volunteer can gain the most benefit, especially if the "organizer/contact persons" at the host is also required to do their primary job at the facility. But this is not a negative aspect and the Recruiting Society can be of great help in doing the necessary administration and in selecting the most suitable and genuine volunteers. Thank you.*

2.3 ANALYSIS OF HOST COMMUNITIES' INPUTS

2.3.1 General Information about the Respondents

The survey on the perception of the local community on international volunteers has been conducted by interviewing some local staff members and local volunteers who are in contact with them, almost daily, at the work placement. **8 of the respondents are paid staff members** and **2 are local volunteers**. They are mainly teachers, physiotherapists, childcare practitioners and professionals, receptionists, programs assistants and managers.

2.3.2 Community Engagement

Thinking about your experience with international volunteers, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
I am very interested in getting to know the volunteers.					5	5
I feel they have the ability to make a difference in my community.					7	3
I speak with the volunteers about our own culture and countries				1	7	2
I feel I am learning new things from them					7	3
I spent my free time with them outside the working hours, as well	4		2	4	1	1
I feel they are interested in understanding and get to know my country and my culture				1	5	4

From the rates given by the respondents, it seems that international volunteers are more than welcome and accepted by the local staff and volunteers. All the interviewed stated being interested in getting to know the volunteers and 90% are interested in getting information on their countries and cultures. Similarly, local staff and volunteers feel that volunteers are interested in getting to know South Africa and its culture through the relationships built within the work placement (stated by 90% of the interviewed). Nevertheless, 20% stated of the local staff and volunteers stated that they spend their free time with the international volunteers outside of working hours, as against 60% who do not, and 40% who neither agreed nor disagreed. With regard to the impact international volunteers my have in the organization, all the respondents feel they can make a remarkable contribution to the community by making a difference through their work. At the same time, they always feel to be learning new thing from them.

Comments on the impact that international volunteers may have on the community and organization development:

All the respondent believe that international volunteers may improve and change for the better things in the organization or in the community by:

- sharing new ideas , knowledge, skills and culture
- putting the local (South African) organization in contact with international founders and donors
- doing needs analysis to find out what is necessary and needed both by organizations and the local community
- having very good work ethic and being always available to help whenever and wherever needed
- bringing new ideas and implementing own projects
- bringing different perspectives that may illuminate various and new ways to approach and address social issues

2.3.3 Volunteer Impact

The volunteer's role in the organization...

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither disagree nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
They are to me a good support in implementing my tasks				1	8	1
Their presence allows staff to widen the community's activities and the number of services offered			1	2	3	4
Their work increases the quality of the services offered to the community					7	3
They bring new ideas, take initiatives and create new projects					7	3

Overall, the local staff and volunteers convey an extremely positive assessment of the impact international volunteers have on the community. All the respondents believe that international volunteers contribute new ideas, initiatives and new projects to the host organization. At the same time the work placement benefits through increased quality of the service offered to the community. 90 % of the interviewed see volunteers as a good and valid support to them in implementing their tasks and 70% stated their presence allows the staff to widen the community's activities and the number of services offered as well.

What local staff and volunteers learn from international volunteers?

- writing and computer skills
- their own culture
- differences and similarities between people coming from different parts of the world
- something new related to my job
- new art and games to do with children
- the creativity they put in organizing activities for our clients
- the innovative approach on the child care program they have – that help local staff develop a more holistic program
- new way of doing the job and the related policy on their country

What international volunteers learn from local staff and local volunteers (from the point of view of the latter)?

- the passion and commitment local workers put in the job
- our culture – how we live, eat and behave
- learning about work issues and how to handle with clients i.e., about disability issues if they work in schools for special kids or abused women and children issue
- learning about South African policy on social issues
- political perspective on several issues

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

	0 not relevant	1 strongly disagree	2 disagre e	3 neither disagre e nor agree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
Are accustomed to different ways of doing things		1		2	5	2
They try to impose their way to do things		1	2	3	4	
Are not always welcome in our community	1	4	4	1		
Don't stay long enough			4	1	4	1
Are more interested in traveling around than in the work at the organization	1		5	4		
Are not interested in the community		2	5	1	2	

Even though the assessment of the work of volunteers has been rated very highly, there are some challenges host community may experience in dealing with or work with them. For instance, 70% of the organizations sometimes find that volunteers are accustomed to different ways of doing things and this difference in the job may represent a challenge in the local environment. 20% of the organizations neither agreed nor disagreed, and just one out of ten strongly disagreed that this is a pitfall. 40% state that volunteers try to impose their own way of working or doing things and 30% said that they did not face this challenge and 30% do not express themselves on this point. With regard to integration in the community, it seems that in no cases the community proved to be reluctant to accept and welcome international volunteers, (as stated by 90% of the respondents). 70% perceived that volunteers are interested in the community and 20% that do not believe so. It follows that 60% state that volunteers seem to be focusing on their service rather than in the touristy side of the experience.

Comments:

- *international volunteers are willing to help anywhere they can.*
- *a challenge can be that they only speak English and not Afrikaans (that is mostly spoken by the community in the area where the organization is based).*

Other problems and challenges aroused by the presence of international volunteers in the community:

- The safety of international volunteers may be a challenge, especially in those areas with high rate of crime
- Language barriers
- Sometimes international volunteers are more focused on their own agenda rather than on the needs of the program and clients

Note: 7 out of 10 respondents think international volunteers do not cause any kind of problems to the community and do not bring any challenges for the organization.

Some reasons to continue hosting international volunteers:

- they implement good skills
- they create a network with other international organization
- they bring "new light", good differences and vibrancy
- they run and create projects that we wouldn't be able to
- they contributed to supply equipment to the clients/learners (e.g. wheelchairs, benches, basketball stuff, etc.)
- they alleviate pressure and work load on (sometimes) minimal staff
- they can volunteer full-time unlike local people who can volunteer for just few hours a day

Final comments:

- *We appreciate to have people from Volunteer Center, they make a big difference to our community and we are proud of them.*
- *They show us that we mean something to the outside world. They tell us we are worth it. Traveling across the world to work for free in our country, tells me they sacrifice to be here to help us.*
- *I have found some volunteers to be very helpful and willing to assist with all the activities in the school.*

2.4 FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS: COMPARISON OF INPUTS

Their own personal development	Organisational development (host coordinating organisation)	Local community development (host project(s) etc.)
<p>Learning points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -International volunteers experience personal growth – increase of self-confidence and self-awareness -They gain new perspectives on life and the world, new inputs for future plans -They increase their adaptability -They get a new perception of their own country and culture -They gain independence <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Language may be a problem hampering self-expression and communication with local people 	<p>Learning points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -International volunteer greatly appreciate nice and enjoyable orientation camps and mid-term evaluation meetings <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sometimes the communication between volunteers and host coordinating organization is dissatisfactory -Sometimes one-to-one relationships between volunteers and individuals and organizations is dissatisfactory -Problems of communication between sending organization and hosting organization concerning the role and tasks of volunteers 	<p>Learning points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They gain a better understanding of NGOs work and dynamics -A more in-depth knowledge of social issues by working at the organization (mental health/disability/HIV) -They feel growth at a professional level (new skills gained) -Living in a host family is considered an enriching experience at a personal and cultural level <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sometimes there are challenges faced in terms of living with host families (e.g. lack of independence, catching up with the family, private dynamics) or in a hostel -Challenges faced in the implementation of activities or personal project due to the lack of support and coordination in the host project -Lack of a very detailed tasks description and of schedule of the activities to be run -Volunteers are not always satisfied with the task orientation received – they need to be trained better to implement their tasks
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -More in-depth outlook on socio-economic and cultural profile of the country during on arrival orientation -Give volunteers the chance to choose the kind of accommodation and more say in logistical arrangements and allow them to negotiate some parts of the agreement -Improve communication systems with volunteers -Provide better material support (i.e. language classes should be arranged at the right time) -Improve communication and information exchange with sending organization -Ensure a better match between volunteers' preferences and organizations' needs 	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Taking into account skills and preferences of volunteers when assigning tasks -Provide a more detailed tasks description for volunteers -Provide better orientation on tasks and work placements -Better time management

<p>Learning points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Developing personal projects make volunteers feel realized and allow them to make a lasting contribution -Volunteers really enjoy being with clients, building relationships with them and learning more about local community <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Volunteers are frustrated because their expectations are not realistic 	<p>Learning points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Volunteers provide unfound and new skills – they bring expertise -Volunteers help local staff with the high workload and make available more quality service for free -Volunteers bring new inputs – they implement their own initiatives and small projects that have positive impact on the organization -Volunteers help organizations to network internationally -Volunteers provide different perspectives on work and on how their country's policy deals with the same social issues <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Volunteers are not well informed about safety and security issues – sometimes they are too carefree and not aware of the perils with the community -Volunteers have too high and unrealistic expectations of their role and tasks at the organization -Volunteers want to change the agreement on tasks description -Some problems related to immature behaviour of volunteers, like abusing the accomodation, alcohol abuse, etc. 	<p>Learning points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Clients love spending time with volunteers – they fill in an emotional gap and provide wider perspectives on the world outside -International volunteers are a stimulus for local volunteer to look outside their own country -International volunteers foster spirit of collaboration among local volunteers and staff -Local volunteers feel inspired by the hard work done by international volunteer and appreciate more volunteering work <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Crime and other issue affecting the community may represent a risk for volunteers if they are not well aware about them
<p>Recommendations (how to maximise volunteer self-growth)</p>	<p>Recommendations (how to maximise organization development)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Voluntary services should be as long as possible to maximise the positive impact on the organization -Volunteers should spend more hours a day at the organization -Provide volunteers with better information on the scope and mission of the host projects in order to keep their expectations realistic -Provide volunteers with appropriate language training when needed to improve communication with community and staff -They should be better orientated on security and safety issues 	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Volunteers should spend more hours a day with clients -Their service should last longer so that they can contribute as much as possible to the community development

Personal development of volunteers	Organisational development and growth	Their own development
<p>Learning points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -International volunteers get to know the culture through human relationships -They learn new job skills and how to handle clients by working with local staff -They gain more in-depth knowledge of politics and social issues by discussing these topics with local staff and volunteers -They learn from the passion and work dedication of local staff and volunteers <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Language can be a challenge whereby Afrikaans or Xhosa are the most spoken language in the community 	<p>Learning points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They bring vibrancy, creativity and “new” light to the organization -They create a network between his projects and other international organization -They help organizations get in contact with international donors -They are able to develop and create projects that we would not be able to <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Language can be a challenge whereby Afrikaans or Xhosa are the most spoken language in the community -Different styles of working -They do not stay long enough 	<p>Learning points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -New skills (e.g. computer skills, writing etc.) -They alleviate the work-load pressure on (sometimes) minimal staff -They provide new and creative approaches to organizations' programs and new working tools and methods -They help local staff to develop the programs run with a more holistic perspective -They report on how their country handles social issues <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Language related problems -Volunteers may focus more on their “own agenda” instead of on organizations' needs
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Appropriate language preparation, when needed -They should be better orientated on security and safety issues -Their service should be longer 	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Appropriate language preparation when needed -They should be better orientated on security and safety issues -Their service should be longer

3 Conclusion

On the whole, the impact of international volunteers has been considered positive by host organizations. They seem to benefit from having them volunteers in terms of skills sharing, intercultural experience and financial sustainability. Of course, the presence of young foreigners has good influence on the organization's residents, clients and users, as well as on the local staff.

The volunteers, as well, seem to be very satisfied with their experience in South Africa. Even though some of them did not have the chance to choose the venue of their service, they stated being happy and captured by the country, mainly because of the variety of the cultures and people they met there. Undoubtedly, all of them perceived growth and change on a personal level through the experience. In other words, they learnt to face differences and through such learning understood about themselves and what they really want to achieve in their lives. On the other hand, some of them experienced little challenges because of the lack of an adequate orientation process at the work placements or had some difficulties in communicating with the host-coordinating organization. However, these were not regarded as big issues and did not hamper their experience.

At community level, local staff and volunteers welcome foreign volunteers as they are seen to be a great support for them and bring new ideas and inputs to the community. The only concern is their safety: It seems that international volunteers are not well informed and prepared to face safety issues and their “careless” behaviour seems to be a matter of concern for local people.

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