

# Global Volunteering for Development Standard

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# Global Standard for Volunteering in Development



## Developing the Global Standard

The Standard is the result of a year-long period of consultation, developed in a participatory way, by experts from Forum members and non-members, as a resource for any organisation involving volunteers in development. They listened to the voices of community representatives, volunteers, staff, hosting and sending organisations, government and others from over 80 countries.

The Global Standard is a voluntary standard, with the aim of improving the outcomes of volunteering for development activities, ensuring organisations that work through and with volunteers are both impactful and responsible in their practice.



# Global Standard for Volunteering in Development



The following definitions constitute central pillars of the Global Standard:

**Volunteering for Development** draws on the skills of volunteers to work alongside people and communities to improve their quality of life and support their own capacities to help address poverty and inequality in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Volunteering for development activities must always aim to be impactful and responsible.

**Impactful Volunteering** delivers measurable and sustainable improvements for poor and marginalised communities that align to a country's national development agendas and to the SDGs.

**Responsible Volunteering** ensures that volunteering activities are locally-identified and designed to respond to the needs of communities as defined by those communities. The selection and preparation of volunteers ensures they can deliver Impactful Volunteering in an equal partnership with the community. In the delivery of these activities, no harm will come to members of the community and volunteers.



# Global Standard for Volunteering in Development



The Global Standard covers 4 themes that are vital to our practice, these are:

- Designing and Delivering Projects
- Duty of Care
- Managing Volunteers
- Measuring Impact

Each theme has a Commitment, that outline the essential organisational responsibilities that underpin each theme. Each theme also has Areas along with Descriptors that are distinctive elements that come together to form the basis of each theme.



# Designing and Delivering Projects

**Commitment** Communities, organisations and volunteers can expect to be involved in collaboratively-designed and effectively-delivered Volunteering for Development projects that respond to community needs and deliver impact and sustainable outcomes.

## Areas and Descriptors

1. Design and planning: The design and planning of a responsible and impactful Volunteering for Development project ensures the project fits into broader development objectives, is led by members of the local community and will 'Do No Harm'.
2. Delivery: The delivery and management of an impactful and responsible Volunteering for Development project fulfils the original project design and involves the community in monitoring.
3. Review and Exit: Impactful Volunteering for Development requires planned closure and robust reviews of projects, providing evidence of impact as well as learning for future projects.

# Duty of Care

**Commitment:** Organisations recognise that they have a duty of care not to cause, or fail to prevent, psychological or physical harm to volunteers, employees and other associates. The community can expect that organisations, and the people associated with them, will protect and will allow no harm to come to anyone in the community in which they operate, whether volunteers or local community members.

## Areas and Descriptors:

1. Safety and Security: Organisations have a responsibility to understand, assess and mitigate risks that may affect the safety of volunteers and communities.
2. Safeguarding and Protection: Recognising that everyone has the right to feel and be safe, organisations should safeguard and protect everybody involved in volunteering, and all those they come into contact with, from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect — with particular attention to vulnerable children and adults.
3. Health and Wellbeing: To ensure the best outcomes for the individual, the organisation and community members, organisations should maintain the physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of volunteers and communities - before, during and after placements.

# Managing Volunteers



**Commitment:** Volunteers can expect to receive preparation, training and support that ensure effective, impactful and ongoing engagement in supporting development efforts locally and internationally.

## Areas and Descriptors

1. Recruitment and Selection: Volunteers are recruited and selected, using consistent criteria, to fulfil the needs defined by the community.
2. Preparation, Training and Learning: To maximise the impact of the placement, pre-placement support and training provided to volunteers and partners ensures that volunteers are well-prepared.
3. Placement and Support: To ensure an impactful placement, volunteers receive effective in-placement professional and personal support.
4. Debriefing, Recognition and Ongoing Engagement: Organisations and volunteers learn from the placement experience; volunteers are recognised for their contributions and are supported to continue their engagement with development efforts.



# Measuring Impact

**Commitment:** Communities, funders and other stakeholders can expect that the intended impact of the project is identified by the community before the start and is tracked throughout, using information and insights from the community, volunteers and other relevant stakeholders. Project success is defined by the community.

## Areas and Descriptors

1. Process: Measuring the impact of a Volunteering for Development project requires the use of an established planning framework and of mechanisms that are inclusive, participatory and responsive to local communities, other stakeholders and the SDGs.
2. Outputs and Outcomes: An impactful Volunteering for Development project identifies the changes to communities, volunteers and organisations caused by the project and by the role of volunteering in the project.
3. Reporting: Impactful volunteering requires the reporting of impact results, linked to SDGs, to all appropriate stakeholders.



# Contributing Organisations

(Forum and non-Forum members involved in developing the standard)



ALTO Global Consulting / Rethink Orphanages  
Australian Red Cross (ARC)  
Australian Volunteers International (AVI)  
Better Care Network  
Cambodia Volunteering Network (VolCam)  
Comhlámh  
Cuso International  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)  
ECPAT International (Every Child Protected Against Trafficking)  
Engineers without Borders Canada  
European Volunteer Centre (CEV)  
Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario (FOCSIV)  
France Volontaires  
Gambia Volunteers  
Habitat for Humanity  
Hope and Homes for Children  
Humanitarian Leadership Academy  
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)  
Johns Hopkins University  
Kenya VIO Society  
Lumos  
Nepal Friendship Society  
Pencils of Promise  
PhilCV  
Projects Abroad  
Raleigh International  
Restless Development  
Rubaroo  
Transform Alliance Africa  
UNICEF  
Unité  
United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV)  
Vine Trust  
Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA)  
Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)  
World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists  
World University Service of Canada (WUSC)



## Call to action



1. Download the Global Standard
2. Sign the 'Kigali Declaration' and register your interest for the self-assessment tool
3. Tell us your experience of engaging with the Global Standard



## Find out more



**James O'Brien**

Executive Coordinator, Forum

[jobrien@forum-ids.org](mailto:jobrien@forum-ids.org)



**Rahim Hassanali**

Volunteering for Development Leadership Manager, VSO  
&  
Coordinator of Forum Leading Standards Working Group,  
Forum

[rahim.hassanali@vsoint.org](mailto:rahim.hassanali@vsoint.org)