



International FORUM on Development Service  
FORUM International du Volontariat pour le Développement

# Voluntary Service and Public Engagement: What's Happening? What's New?

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## **Foreword**

This is the second in a series of discussion papers produced by FORUM, which follows on from our research work on trends in International volunteering and co-operation in recent years. One of the key trends identified in this time has been how International Volunteer and Co-operation Organisations (IVCOs) engage in public engagement.

This paper aims to consider some of the ways we engage, what we can learn from those experiences and identify some challenges for the future.

The views expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of FORUM or its members or of the organisations for whom the author works. The responsibility for these views rests with the author alone.



Cliff Allum, President of FORUM

### ***About FORUM***

International FORUM on Development Service is a network of organisations engaged in international volunteering and personnel exchange. FORUM aims to share information, develop best practice and enhance co-operation between its members.

FORUM's members include both non-governmental (NGO) and state organisations from around the world.

The main activities of FORUM include the following:

- We facilitate the sharing of information, through our website, news updates, sharing of knowledge and experiences.
- We commission and undertake research, as well as facilitating members' involvement in research into issues around international volunteering.
- We organise an annual conference for heads of agencies known as IVCO. This conference is primarily concerned with issues of change, redefining international volunteering and offering opportunities to learn about new models of activity.

## Introduction

I begin this short paper with two caveats. Firstly, I must make it very clear that this is not the result of rigorous research. It is not even a comprehensive overview of what International Volunteer Co-operation Organisations (IVCOs) are doing in the areas of 'development education', public engagement and public policy advocacy<sup>1</sup> - though in preparing the paper, it struck me that a more thorough inventory might be a useful contribution by FORUM – to document and share what is being done in these areas. Researched and written in three weeks, this is simply one person's observations, based on conversations with fifteen IVCO leaders, augmented by a few days of internet research and reading<sup>2</sup>, and 30 plus years of experience that has brought me back to these issues of "global citizenship" at regular intervals, in both my community and working life (which began as a CUSO volunteer in Papua New Guinea in 1970).

My second caveat is that I have glossed over a great deal of detail and nuance, and made choices about what to focus on, in preparing this overview. I presume that IVCO readers will interact with my observations from the perspective of their own experience, and insert some of the missing pieces into the discussion at FORUM's IVCO meeting in September.

The purpose of this paper is to stimulate thought, and perhaps some common action, among organisations that are already committed to learning from one another's practice, and collaborating in areas of mutual interest, including on how you engage your publics "at home". It was the Forum's last annual gathering that suggested this focus. As I embarked on this project, I did consult minutes, trends analyses and as much material on public engagement as I could find from previous FORUM conferences.

I offer my thanks to the people who spoke to me so enthusiastically during July, and apologise to those I couldn't get to on short notice. After each conversation I was energised – by the sheer array of interesting and innovative things that your organisations are doing, and by the evident commitment that you have to making a better world – whatever your approach. This small survey – however incomplete - has reminded me that good people in many places are doing their best to make a difference.

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<sup>1</sup> See "terminology" box next page

<sup>2</sup> see **Appendix 2** for a list of people interviewed, and websites consulted.

**A note about terminology:**

People in different places use a variety of terms to describe similar things, and sometimes use the same term to describe quite different things. Without getting too hung up on terminology, I define some of the terms in this paper, as I use them.

**cross-cultural education:** education that helps people to appreciate other peoples' cultures, and to learn that, "my way is not the only way"; education that encourages a sensitivity to and respect for cultural differences, in all communications, relationships and interactions.

**development education:** education about specific development issues and the causes of global inequality and injustice, aimed at raising the awareness and changing the attitudes of targeted individuals, and moving them to action for change that favours equitable development.

**global citizenship:** citizens' action that reflects the worldview of people who see themselves as responsible citizens of the world and agents for change; who base their actions, whether in the personal, national or international sphere, on an understanding of the inter-connectedness of peoples, and a commitment to address global issues in their own lives.

**public or community engagement:** efforts that encourage a targeted public to take positive action for change – whether in their roles as (global) citizens, in organisations, as community or political activists, responsible consumers, or workers.

**(public policy) advocacy:** individual or collective efforts targeted at specific governments or inter-governmental institutions, aimed at changing specific public policies in favour of global justice and equitable development.

**campaigning:** large-scale and usually long-term mobilisation of individuals and organisations, aimed at institutional and political change, whether nationally or on a global scale.

Even among the 14 organisations I contacted, there is considerable diversity – of legal status, purpose, structure and program focus - which must surely be amplified in the wider 'universe' of IVCOs. Three (Fredskorpset, JOCV and Peace Corps) are government institutions – with the advantages and limitations that entails. UNV, as a member of the UN system, is unique; it has a privileged relationship with other UN agencies and governments worldwide. The rest are independent non-governmental organisations, but some of them are IVCO coalitions or co-ordinating bodies, with roles that differ from their 'operational' members. Some focus almost exclusively on volunteering and volunteerism; others include volunteering as part of a wider mandate. Some have always worked with their 'home publics' in ways that go beyond publicity, fundraising and recruitment; some have come to this wider mandate more recently. Others have shifted their principal *raison d' être* from 'cross-cultural exchange' to 'development', with repercussions on how they approach education, public engagement and advocacy. Some are struggling to assert themselves as professional organisations, in the face of a perception that volunteering is out-dated and amateurish – 'well-

intentioned, but not terribly effective'. These and other factors impinge both on what organisations are permitted to do, and what they choose to do, in the program areas covered in this paper.

### **Volunteering, what comes after it, and the role of the IVCO**

In the following pages, I focus largely on what International Volunteer Co-operation Organisations do **beyond** preparing volunteers for their assignments, and supporting them 'in the field'. Nonetheless, I accept as given that international volunteering is itself a substantial commitment by individuals to engage with, and play a role in the world, which is motivated by much more than individual self-interest. I know, too, that different organisations work in different ways with volunteers, and expect different things of them throughout the volunteer cycle. These differing expectations are likely to help orient volunteers' long-term engagement, and should be considered from that perspective.

Almost everyone I spoke with reminded me that deciding to volunteer, and then volunteering, are important steps along an individual's trajectory of personal change, and are likely indicators of both international awareness and engagement that predate the decision to volunteer. Certainly, international volunteering has a marked impact on the worldview and attitudes of the people who do it. Anecdotally, we all know that (good) volunteer experiences can and often do influence the choices that former volunteers make later in their lives. This is borne out in at least two studies of volunteer alumni.<sup>3</sup> An enhanced sense of 'global citizenship' (my word), and engagement - at a rate higher than average, in community or international organisations, or professional life - appear to be predictable outcomes of a volunteer's experience. As they move into the next phase of their lives after finishing their international assignment, former volunteers seek 'coherence and continuity' with the values, attitudes, inter-cultural and other skills they acquire or deepen as volunteers. They tend to re-orient their personal and/or professional lives in ways that can integrate their new learning and worldview.<sup>4</sup>

**It seems logical, then, that what IVCOs should strive to do in this context, is to design programs that facilitate and lead more deliberately to the long-term engagement of returning volunteers, and reproduce for people who have not had an international volunteer experience, some of the conditions that lead to the types of attitude change and actions that we witness among volunteer alumni.**

**At the same time, IVCOs must find ways to do this, while taking account of global trends, the changing roles of civil society and IVCOs, and a more overtly political (or policy focused) analysis of what must change in the world, for equitable development to happen.**

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<sup>3</sup> Studies from Canada and Switzerland reached remarkably similar conclusions about the impact of the volunteer experience on the choices returned volunteers make later in life.

<sup>4</sup> See in particular Chantal Furrer; *Echanger et Changer... ici et maintenant: L'Impact d'engagement des volontaires FSF (E-CHANGER) de retour 1982-1996 sur la société suisse*; 1998

### **Diverse organisations, varied motivations for public engagement**

Though much of their work is similar, **governmental and non-governmental IVCOs differ in at least two ways that influence what they (can) do with their home publics.** Firstly, the activities of governmental IVCOs must be consistent with the policy priorities of their governments. This is not the case for non-governmental IVCOs, which are (more) at liberty to be critics of their governments' policies. Secondly, one of the explicit purposes of governmental IVCOs is to be 'goodwill ambassadors' for their countries, and to build friendship between peoples. This may also be one of the reasons that governments fund non-governmental IVCOs, and is almost certainly an outcome of non-governmental volunteering. But it is not the central motivation for non-governmental IVCO. These differences are reflected in the education, engagement and advocacy work of IVCOs.

Non-governmental IVCOs, like many other international NGOs, have generally understood that profound structural change is needed in the North, for development, social justice and the expression of fundamental human rights to be possible in the South. This, put very simply, is the essential understanding that now drives much of the work that they undertake with their publics - aimed at bringing about the changes that are seen to be needed at home. Their entry points, their choice of issues, approaches and strategies differ markedly, but **the public engagement and advocacy work of most non-governmental IVCOs, and much of their development education are grounded in an understanding that the current world order must change, and that much of the change must happen in the North.** This is a quite different from their emphasis on cross cultural education of earlier decades - which is, however, still relevant and still done - especially in preparing volunteers for their assignments; in some schools-related work; and (for example) as a component of initiatives to address immigration and refugee policy, xenophobia and racism at home.

### **The broader context**

There is no space here to do more than recall some of the realities that impinge on the work of IVCOs with their publics at home. At the risk of gross oversights and omissions, I note the following, all of which may have an impact on IVCO programming choices:

- Globalisation, and a movement in global civil society that has grown up in its wake – promoting trade justice and corporate accountability in an international trade regime that is unfairly biased against the South
- The global security agenda and the war on terror, which have redirected many governments' priorities and resources, and displaced other pressing international concerns from the media and public consciousness
- A growing list of inter-governmental commitments from big multilateral conferences, and their five and ten year reviews, and the relative failure to make substantial headway on most of them; the presence of an increasingly capable contingent of civil society organisations at these events and in the multilateral arena generally
- Commitment by the world's governments to the Millennium Development Goals, and a global movement within civil society pressing governments to achieve them; in this context, the emergence of numerous global civil society coalitions and campaigns,

like Make Poverty History, Education for All, the Global Treatment Access Group, aimed at keeping the pressure on

- Major challenges to multilateralism itself, and widespread calls for UN reform, from supporters and detractors of multilateralism
- The emergence of new international human rights instruments, and a growing rights-based approach to development
- A growing recognition of climate change by governments and their citizens worldwide, and a growing understanding that development and environmental concerns are intricately intertwined
- A new OECD aid regime that is now shaping all OECD aid, spelled out in the “Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness”; its redirection of some aid money to government budgetary support, its focus on “results”, and almost total exclusion of civil society, in a vision of effective aid that focuses on bilateral aid relationships.
- A tendency of donor governments to support Southern NGOs directly.

### **A snapshot of findings**<sup>5</sup>

With these cursory nods to the motivation behind IVCO’s home-based programs, and the wider context of their work, I move now to some observations about what IVCOs are actually doing in the areas of development education, public engagement and advocacy, and then to some specific issues that may warrant further attention. In broad strokes, this is what I observed.

#### ***Findings***

- Most International Volunteer Co-operation Organisations (IVCOs) include in their **mission statements** and/or their strategic plans some commitment to work in their home countries, beyond public relations, volunteer recruitment and fundraising. However, the objectives of these activities, and the activities themselves vary greatly among IVCOs.
- **Some IVCOs do much more** education, engagement and advocacy than others. Some see these as peripheral to their ‘main purpose’ of volunteer placement, but most now see them as an important component of the organisation’s work. Government IVCOs, and some organisations funded by governments, are limited in the advocacy they (can) do.
- Some organisations **are much newer to these activities** than others. Some whose mandates recently added these activities are still trying to find an appropriate balance between their international and ‘home country’ programs.
- Most IVCOs recognise that individual **volunteer alumni** have differing appetites for engagement on their return, and that **different approaches** appeal to different people, partly depending on factors such as age, gender, family status, place in career, and ‘distance’ from international experience.
- Virtually all IVCOs encourage and support volunteer alumni to engage in their **communities**, in a wide variety of ways.
- Most IVCOs do some form of **public education or public engagement**: outreach not focused on fundraising or recruitment that directly targets a public larger than returned volunteers.

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<sup>5</sup> See **Appendix 1** for a more complete inventory of the types of activities that IVCOs reported on.

- Many have programs aimed specifically at **schools** or the **school system**; many have developed **pedagogical materials** for use in schools. Some of these initiatives are national in scope and very comprehensive, others much less so. This is an area where a more systematic sharing of approaches, strategies and good practice might be useful.
- Several have programs directed at **children and youth**, outside the school context.
- Many organisations promote **responsible consumerism** and/or **fair trade**, among alumni and a wider public.
- Most non-governmental IVCOs do some **public policy advocacy**, but its content and form vary considerably among organisations, as does the relative importance that IVCOs ascribe to it. Some (especially government) IVCOs **limit their advocacy** to support for volunteerism, and/or building an enabling environment for voluntary action and civil society around the world. The advocacy of most IVCOs, however, **is promoting policy change on specific issues**.
- Some organisations have a more overtly '**political edge**' to their engagement / advocacy than others
- Within countries and internationally, **International Volunteer Co-operation Organisations increasingly work together**, including on public education, engagement and advocacy.
- IVCOs also participate in many **wider issue-specific coalitions and campaigns**, combining their 'assets' with those of national and international organisations in other sectors, for greater public and political impact. Virtually all IVCOs that do advocacy try to bring **volunteer alumni into these campaigns**.
- In addition to activities that involve volunteer alumni, many IVCOs run other **engagement and advocacy programs that don't focus on alumni** – e.g. with faith communities, schools, universities, trade unions, professional associations etc.
- Some IVCOs are inventing new ways to **link activists from specific sectors** or movements in their home countries, with similar sectors and movements in other countries. Several have inserted a volunteer component into these North-South activist exchanges – **breaking down old boundaries between international volunteering and home-based activities**, and **intentionally contributing to 'development' both North and South**. Documentation of these initiatives might be fruitful.
- Some organisations make a deliberate link between their support for **civil society capacity-building, at home and abroad**.
- Some organisations intentionally try to engage **diaspora communities** in both international and home-based programs, and to formally link the two. Even without programs focused on immigrants, several IVCOs described innovative examples of diaspora involvement in their activities. Documentation of these examples – their intended purposes, intended and unintended outcomes - would be valuable.
- Some international IVCOs have developed **national volunteer programs** in their home countries, learning from their international experience to tackle **development issues at home**.
- In general, IVCOs have done much less work to **engage people in their professional lives**, than in the areas noted above. But interesting new initiatives exist, which target volunteer alumni in their working lives, and/or aim to **bring an international perspective to the employment sectors** where IVCOs and volunteer alumni work.
- A few IVCOs have developed **business partnerships** or other initiatives to **engage with employers** e.g. via study tours or (partially) paid leaves during which

employees volunteer. Some IVCOs see these relationships as entry points for future efforts to **promote corporate social responsibility**.

- Several IVCOs have conducted studies or evaluations to assess the **impact of international volunteering** on individual volunteer alumni, and, to a lesser extent, or by extension, on their home countries. Some IVCOs have commissioned national **polls** to measure public opinion or knowledge of international development-related issues. I heard of **no studies that tried to gauge the impact of IVCO education, engagement or advocacy directly**. All these areas might merit follow-up documentation and study.
- Several IVCOs have strong **university ties**, and different types of relationships with individual academics, faculties, and student bodies. They are undertaking a variety of joint initiatives, including efforts to change course content (e.g. in development studies, medical schools' curricula) and research on issues relevant to IVCOs.
- All IVCOs are using the **internet**: at a minimum to communicate with and engage volunteer alumni and the wider public, and often in innovative ways to support other engagement and advocacy efforts.
- Several IVCOs and IVCO coalitions are developing or have developed **national databases of volunteer alumni**, for multiple purposes, including alumni engagement and advocacy. Some report using these to good effect, in mobilising volunteer alumni.
- The **degree of governments' commitment** to public engagement by IVCOs, and their tolerance for IVCO advocacy seems to vary a good deal. Most **governments support** some form of development education and public engagement by IVCOs, but they have markedly different attitudes to advocacy by IVCOs and other government-funded organisations.
- Virtually all organisations identify **limited financial and staff resources** as an impediment to more, or more effective, public engagement and advocacy. Others identify **competition for funds**, the **challenge of agreeing on common coalition objectives and strategies**, and the need for a clear focus and **strategic thinking**.

### Current issues

In this section I identify a number of practical issues that seem worthy of further consideration. They tend to zero in on new approaches to engagement and advocacy. This emphasis is not intended to pass judgement on the many 'tried and true' activities that organisations do, especially those that embed education and engagement in the volunteer cycle. It is simply to signal some issues that seem particularly relevant in the current world of IVCOs.

#### ***Coalitions – when are they useful? how to choose?***

Coalitions of several types have become a standard feature in the lives of IVCOs. IVCOs themselves join together nationally and internationally, to learn from one another and share good practices (witness this FORUM). On a country level, most non-governmental IVCOs (or their coalitions) are also members of national councils of international development organisations, often in order to increase their collective voice with government, on (agreed) matters of national policy. Finally, IVCOs bring their organisational resources to issue-specific national and international coalitions, aimed at achieving specific changes on particular issues, in the national and inter-governmental

arena. Make Poverty History, campaigning on the MDGs, 0.7 per cent GDP for aid, and Education for All are good examples.

IVCOs have recognised the advantages of working in issue-based coalitions. By pooling their assets (usually people who have international experience) with the assets of others, IVCOs can gain access to reliable information, good research, skilled communications expertise, and political savvy. But IVCOs also raise questions about working in coalitions: What makes a good one? How does a IVCO decide how much time it's worth, to negotiate common objectives with others, and find common ground among different opinions and political strategies? Are their own issues or positions sidelined or diluted in the process? There are no pat answers. But with a proliferation of possible coalitions to join, organisations will increasingly have to make strategic choices, based on their own expertise, the 'value added' they can bring to a coalition, the benefits to their own work, and - in my view a critical criterion - the clarity of the coalition's policy objectives. The sharper the focus is, the more effective the coalition, in my view. Without clear objectives, coalitions and networks can eat up a lot of time.

### ***New approaches to engagement: breaking down the boundaries between 'here' and 'there'***

A common finding from volunteer alumni studies is that returnees become more involved than their compatriots in addressing local and national development issues, while still maintaining an international worldview, and an interest or involvement in specific international concerns. Similarly, IVCOs are finding ways to build programmatic bridges between their international development programs, and 'domestic' development concerns. In doing so, they are breaking down old boundaries between 'here' and 'there', international and national programming. They are doing this in a variety of ways: by placing national volunteers in their own (traditional donor) countries; via South-North volunteering and exchanges; by working with refugees, immigrants and organised diaspora communities, who personally bridge the divide between continents; and via volunteer placements or exchanges that bring together experienced activists or 'change agents' from one country with their counterparts from other countries, to share information and strategies on common concerns (e.g. the environment, violence against women, community economic development, refugee concerns). What is common to all of these is multi-directional learning, true international exchange, and a substantial shift in purpose from 'changing things over there' to building connections and movements for change across national boundaries and continents. In addition, these examples all tap the 'personnel exchange' potential of IVCOs in new and creative ways. Often the most innovative work that IVCOs described to me was in areas such as these. I think it is an area ripe for further IVCO exchange and collaboration.

### ***Initiatives in the workplace and people's professional lives***

Another type of innovation cited by several IVCOs is in the area of workplace engagement. This too dovetails with evidence from volunteer alumni surveys, which point to a tendency for newly-returned alumni to seek coherence and continuity between the values, attitudes and skills acquired in their international employment, and their future work. Volunteers often make quite dramatic career (and study) changes on their return, in order to align their working lives more closely with their new worldview. Anecdotally, IVCOs report that even a short international work placement can have significant impact on the career choices of an individual. Whether intentionally or

intuitively, IVCOs seem to be looking for ways to build on this fact. At least two approaches are emerging.

One is to work with volunteer alumni (e.g. engineers, teachers, medical personnel) in the context of their workplaces and professional affiliations, to bring an international perspective into 'mainstream' institutions, companies, trade unions and professional associations. The other new model is the 'business partnership', which aims to bring an ethos of global citizenship to a specific workplace, sometimes in addition to fundraising and other forms of corporate support. IVCOs described a variety of innovative initiatives of this kind, developed with employers. They tend to involve extended leave for international work assignments, and an ongoing commitment in the workplace by participants on their return. In both models, these initiatives may provide an eventual entrée to a deliberate discussion of corporate social responsibility. I think these initiatives also merit more systematic documentation and collaboration.

### ***Measuring the impact of engagement***

To design effective strategies for public engagement and advocacy, IVCOs need solid data – for instance about how volunteer alumni already engage, and how they want to engage. IVCOs need information about what forms of engagement 'work' with different segments of the public, and for what purposes. They need data on the impacts of specific campaigns. Given the scarcity of resources, and the potential value of international results, a coordinated approach to such data gathering among IVCOs may be useful.

I presume more research exists in areas such as these than I was able to track down in a few days. My quick hunch is that more has been done to assess the impact of volunteering on volunteers, and by extrapolation on their home countries when they return, than has been done specifically to assess the impact of public engagement or advocacy efforts themselves. These things are undoubtedly hard to measure, and attribution is obviously difficult. But that doesn't mean they shouldn't be tried. If it hasn't already been done, it would at least be worth gathering together a list of such impact studies, making them widely accessible, perhaps identifying common findings, and areas for possible future study. It might then be worth designing new studies, in collaboration with university researchers - to ensure methodological rigour, and to be sure that findings could be reliably compared across countries <sup>6</sup>.

### ***A dilemma: government funding, political change***

Several people I spoke with referred to a dilemma built into the funding arrangements of any IVCO that receives government money, which most do. As someone said in the 1970s, when I was a newly returned volunteer working in development education, 'the state won't fund the revolution'. Times have changed, but this is still true! Whatever differences may exist from country to country, regarding what non-profit organisations can do in the realm of policy advocacy, there are limits on their political activity. As IVCOs come to understand that profound structural changes are needed globally, including policy change in their own countries, they bump up against this reality. Policy advocacy and partisan politics are obviously different, but the distinctions can sometimes

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<sup>6</sup> See **Appendix 3**. It summarises an idea that emerged for a longitudinal study on the impact of volunteering on home countries, post-volunteer assignment.

blur in practice. Organisations must be strategically astute as they plan their public mobilisation and advocacy work. I have no magic answer to this dilemma, but it is one that IVCOs need to be face, as they consider their advocacy agenda, their place within coalitions, and their strategic alliances with others - including organisations that don't have the same constraints that they have. The dilemma will not go away.

### **Suggestions for further documentation and collaboration**

In addition to the possible joint work on impacts noted above, this review suggests several areas that may be worthy of further documentation and collaboration among IVCOs internationally. To summarise, the FORUM might:

- Prepare and maintain a comprehensive, update-able inventory or database of what IVCOs are doing in different countries in development education, engagement and advocacy, under headings similar to those I use in Appendix 1. Use a standard format for each entry (perhaps a one page summary), allow organisations to add and remove material, and make it all available on line.
- Document what IVCOs are doing in schools and within the education systems of their countries.
- Provide a 'show and tell' space on line where IVCOs can share the pedagogical materials they have developed for use in schools, with youth, and other publics.
- Document how and why IVCOs are working 'at home' with immigrants, refugees, and/or organised diaspora communities.
- Document new models of exchange that break down the distinctions between 'here' and 'there', and encourage multi-directional development and learning.
- Document examples of IVCO-business partnerships: how they are engaging employers, employees, and addressing issues of corporate social responsibility.
- Document new efforts to engage volunteer alumni in their workplaces, or professional lives.
- Document other new engagement initiatives: e.g. national volunteering, linking activists across continents, and other home-based programming.
- In all of these, create opportunities for exchange among people working in similar areas.

Given the range of activities being undertaken by IVCOs, and the new initiatives being tested, there is ample scope for peer learning and future collaboration, in the areas of education, engagement and advocacy.

## **Appendix 1**

### **A (partial) inventory of IVCO education, engagement and advocacy**

The work that IVCOs do 'at home' can be placed along a number of continuums, which intersect. It ranges from activities targeted at volunteer alumni to those that engage a wider public; from awareness-raising and education to individual or collective action; from single-organisation programs to work in coalitions. Below are some of the activities that IVCOs reported<sup>7</sup>. Breaking them down this way risks fragmenting what is, within organisations, a more seamless and integrated whole. But it captures the breadth of activities that IVCOs collectively do.

#### ***Embedding education (and an expectation of continued 'engagement') into all steps of the volunteer placement process, starting with IVCO advertising and recruitment, and ending with volunteer debriefing***

- Including an educational component in every point of the volunteer cycle
- Formally linking volunteers during their assignments to their country of origin in some way, thus establishing contacts for later follow-up

#### ***Helping volunteers and newly returned volunteers in practical ways to 'tell their story'***

- engaging professional photographers and videographers to work with volunteers
- coaching returning volunteers in public speaking
- encouraging volunteers (at a debriefing session) to identify their spheres of influence, and develop a personal outreach plan
- maintaining a speakers bank or bureau
- inviting appropriate volunteers to speak at relevant events (e.g. people who have worked with refugees in war zones to take part in a national seminar on refugees)

#### ***Assisting volunteers to re-integrate and engage***

- ensuring that all volunteers have a support group, to help them re-integrate and engage on their return
- holding (face-to-face) debriefing sessions for returnees that suggest avenues for continued engagement, and periodic follow-up sessions in different cities
- providing practical 're-entry kits' to alumni, with suggested avenues for different types of engagement
- extending volunteer contracts to include some public engagement activities on their return
- providing space on organisational websites, or separate websites, for volunteer alumni
- making staff support (a Returned Volunteer Coordinator) available to meet with alumni (in their own communities where possible) at periodic intervals after their return

#### ***Working directly in schools***

- linking individual schools with volunteers while in their placements

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<sup>7</sup> Each item on this list was mentioned by at least one organisation, or described on one website that I looked at. I have not attributed these generic activities to specific IVCOs, however, because many of them are common to more than one organisation, and the list is undoubtedly incomplete.

- linking children in these schools directly with one another (e.g. via classroom hook-ups, postcards, an exchange of drawings)
- linking active volunteers and alumni to schools for classroom presentations and speaking
- (tapping government funding) to produce educational materials, and work in classrooms
- using some combination of the above as part of a more comprehensive program to connect volunteers and alumni with their local schools

***Working within official structures of the education system to internationalise and build global citizenship into school curricula at different levels***

- Working in national-level initiatives to change curriculum, and to add a global citizenship aspect into various subjects
- Doing teacher-education
- Developing (curriculum-linked) materials for use in schools and/or with children and youth in other venues (e.g. Girl Guides)
- Working with a teachers' union to develop curriculum material

***Other work with children and youth***

- Running programs in conjunction with organised groups of young people (e.g. Girl Guides)
- Running exchange programs and study tours designed for youth

***Information, education and outreach to communities***

- Supporting alumni and organisational participation at community events
- Encouraging alumni to connect with local service clubs, their religious/faith affiliations etc; organisational outreach to these same networks nationally
- Working with community newspapers (including regular reports from volunteers in 'the field')
- Working with municipalities on development education activities (e.g. conducting an annual, multi-faceted, community education program, in co-operation with community-based organisations and people with international experience)
- In one case, disseminating information about the MDGs via post offices
- Offering national prizes and awards (e.g. awarding a high profile, national Human Rights Award in the country's parliament)
- Touring art and photo exhibitions (e.g. of exhibition of art by children from different countries, about their aspirations)

***Directing the 'assets' of IVCOs (organisational infrastructure, people, their commitment and experience) into ongoing global campaigns with specific policy demands; providing on line support materials to alumni for well-informed involvement, e.g.***

- Make Poverty History (with objectives of 0.7 per cent ODA, debt relief, trade reform etc)
- Education for All
- Global Treatment Access Group (G-TAG) for HIV drugs
- Campaign against small arms trade
- developing sector-specific materials for alumni

- using on-line seminars, to brief interested volunteers on campaign issues, and prepare them for lobby efforts, etc

***Political lobbying on specific issues***

- meeting with elected representatives on specific issues
- using a volunteer database to identify alumni in specific electoral constituencies, for targeted lobbying (e.g. lobbying the finance minister in his constituency)
- preparing material for political campaigns or lobbying

***Working with and engaging volunteer alumni and others in the context of their working/professional lives e.g.***

- setting up workplace-based leave or study programs with employers, for employee exchanges or volunteer opportunities, with reporting requirements on return; workplace-based education and engagement, and corporate social responsibility spin-offs
- conducting workplace-based education programs, linked with profession-specific volunteering and engagement (e.g. with engineering or high-tech companies)
- limiting IVCOs development education, public engagement and advocacy to those sectors where the organisation's volunteers work (e.g. health, education, agriculture); focusing engagement efforts on institutions in those sectors (e.g. internationalising the medical school curriculum at universities)
- tapping the professional expertise of volunteer alumni to influence their professions at home; promoting action on profession-linked issues
- publishing professionally relevant articles with international content in professional journals
- speaking at professional conferences about professionally relevant issues addressed while working abroad
- engaging professionals in their own sector on specific campaigns, and developing materials specific to their profession (e.g. work with teachers union to develop curriculum material)
- reporting on professional volunteer experience, to professional and students' associations

***Working with diaspora communities***

- involving refugees and people from immigrant groups, in education and engagement activities in their new countries/countries of residence
- recruiting immigrants as volunteers to their countries of origin or elsewhere, and building links back to the diaspora communities on their return
- involving members of specific immigrant communities in organisational governance structures
- working with organised diaspora communities (e.g. with immigrants of 'African', Bangladeshi, Filipino, Guyanese, Jordanian, Palestinian, Senegalese, Syrian, and Tongan origin)

***Breaking down the distinction between 'here' and 'there', bringing an international perspective to national issues, and building global movements for change***

- developing national volunteer initiatives that use international personnel and experience to address national concerns (e.g. in Aboriginal Australian communities)
- facilitating South-North volunteering and exchanges

- placing volunteers or facilitating exchanges that bring together experienced activists or “change agents” from one country with people working on similar issues elsewhere, to learn from one another on issues of common concern and expertise (e.g. the environment, violence against women, community economic development, refugee concerns)

***Encouraging volunteer alumni and the wider public to be responsible consumers***

- linking them with fair trade initiative; encouraging them to promote fair trade in their communities, organisations they are affiliated with, and workplaces
- youth education programs on responsible consumerism

***Promoting responsible tourism***

- running a responsible tourism program, supported by the IVCO field offices

***Working with individual academics, universities and other research institutes, to internationalise the institutions or influence courses of study***

- bringing an international development perspective to academic institutions (e.g. in medical schools, engineering faculties, continuing education courses for teachers)
- working in collaboration with development studies programs, developing and/or contributing to courses

***Using all organisational communications tools (websites, magazines, e-newsletters, podcasts etc) for specific education, engagement and advocacy purposes***

***Producing materials and developing other communications strategies specific to education, engagement and advocacy***

- using new web-based social interaction spaces for education and engagement, e.g. ‘Facebook’, ‘My space’, blogs

***Developing and maintaining databases of returned volunteers, with relevant information about their expertise, interests, country of service, availability for specific activities – for a range of purposes, e.g.***

- keeping in touch; providing support to alumni
- mobilising for campaigns
- political lobbying; targeting political meetings by constituency
- identifying individuals in specific workplaces (e.g. government) who can provide access
- tracking, and possible survey follow up

***Working with the media***

- dedicating a place on organisational websites specifically for media
- focusing media outreach on local media (local newspapers, radio, TV) – often making a connection with serving volunteers or alumni from the local area; providing support to the individuals involved
- issuing media releases on new initiatives and newsworthy activities

## **Appendix 2:**

### **People, websites and documentation consulted staff of international volunteer co-operation organisations:**

- **Kimberly Bowman**, Director of Outreach, Engineers Without Borders (Canada)
- **Peter Britton**, Senior Manager International Services, Australian Volunteers International
- **Christine Campbell**, National Director External Relations, Canadian Crossroads International
- **Paul Davidson**, Executive Director, World University Service of Canada
- **Shona Jennings**, External Relations Manager, Te Tuao Tawahi Volunteer Service Abroad, New Zealand / Aotearoa
- **Donna Keher**, Chief Partnerships, Communications and Resources Mobilisation Group; United Nations Volunteers
- **Claire Lewis – Armes**, Coordinator International Forum on Development Service
- **Amanda Khozi Mukwashi**, Head of External Relations, Skillshare, UK
- **Heidi Lasi**, Senior Advisor, Public Engagement and Communications, VSO Canada
- **Håkon Ødegård**, Head of Communications, Fedkorpset, Norway
- **Jody Olsen**, Deputy Director, Peace Corps, USA
- **Naoki Saiko**, Japan International Co-operation Agency/Japan Voluntary Co-operation Organisation
- **Matthew Snell**, British Volunteer Agencies' Liaison Group
- **Pierre Veronneau**, Directeur General / **Christine Laliberte**, Oxfam Quebec (Canada)

### **Others:**

- **Kate McLaren**, (Consultant conducting the public engagement component of an evaluation of CIDA's Volunteer Cooperation Program - the government funding envelope for 10 of Canada's Volunteer Cooperation Organizations)
- **Rieky Stuart**, (Consultant and co-author of a trends paper for the International Forum on Development Service)
- **Donna Schwartzburg**, Advisor, International Development Projects, CIDA

### **Websites Consulted:**

- organisational websites of all the IVCO people contacted above
- English, French and Spanish language components of the websites of most other organisations on FORUM coordinator's contact list, and some other IVCOs
- FORUM – in particular past minutes, trends papers, and presentations to previous FORUM conferences on public engagement
- Global Citizens for Change (a Canadian collaboration on public engagement)
- BOND, UK
- Japan International Volunteer Centre
- NZ Council for International Development
- Uniterra (Canadian collaboration between WUSC and CECI)
- World Volunteer Web (managed by UNV) <http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/>

- websites of official development agencies of: Australia, Canada, France, New Zealand, Norway, UK

### **Studies Consulted**

- **Chantal Furrer**; *Echanger et Changer... ici et maintenant: L'Impact d'engagement des volontaires FSF (E-CHANGER) de retour 1982-1996 sur la société suisse*; 1998
- **CUSO / Sean Kelly**; *Canadians Overseas, Canadians Back Home – Volunteerism Without Borders*; 2006
- **NORAD**: Evaluation of Fredskorpset; 2006

### **Appendix 3**

#### **A possible international study on the impact of volunteering and volunteer alumni engagement on their home countries**

In my conversations during this review, the idea of an international, longitudinal impact study gained some traction. It would look at how international volunteers engage in their home countries, at periodic intervals following their return. And it would attempt to measure the impact of these engagements of the volunteer sending countries. In order not to lose this germ of an idea, I report on it briefly here, so it can be followed up if there is interest in it.

#### **What?**

- Conduct a large international study (say in 10 to 15 countries) tracking volunteer responses to the same questions - pre-departure, immediately post-return, and at (say) two, five and ten year intervals after that.
- Ensure that relevant data are tracked about the volunteer placement: e.g. country of volunteer service, type of volunteer placement, length of volunteer placement
- Ensure that appropriate demographic and other personal data are gathered: e.g. gender, age, family circumstances, professional status, stage in career etc.
- Ask questions about whether and how people engage with development issues locally, nationally and internationally
- 'Go beyond questions about what people do and what they know, to how they think and relate to others'.
- Ask questions that get at values, attitudes, consumer behaviour, volunteering or activism at home, continued international interests and activity, policy or political engagement, professional choices, children's education
- Ask open-ended questions about how they think their volunteer experience influenced how they think and interact with others, and what they now do.
- Ask how their worldview has changed, how that has affected their relationships, community and organisational affiliations, and their professional lives.
- Find some quantitative measures to assess the cumulative impact of all this on volunteer sending countries.
- Possibly find a comparator group of people who might be expected to have a comparable level of social awareness (e.g. social workers) to permit some assessment of the impact of the international experience.
- Find a 'general public' control group to compare with.

#### **Why?**

- A study such as this would facilitate 'evidence-based' program planning.
- It would allow disaggregation of findings by demographic group, and type of engagement.
- It would permit comparisons between countries, and different types of volunteering.
- It would help benchmark and track impacts, in a world that increasingly requires measurable results.