

Comhlámh's

Volunteering

Options

Code of Good

**Practice for Sending Organisations:
Principles and Indicators**

**Encouraging good practice in
volunteering for global development**





Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice for Sending Organisations

Introduction

The Code of Good Practice has been developed as part of Comhlámh's Volunteering Options Programme. It sets out standards for organisations involved in facilitating international volunteer placements in developing countries, focusing on the involvement of the three main stakeholders involved in any overseas placement: the sending organisation, the host project, and the volunteer. Additionally, it reflects a number of core values. These are: partnership, quality, security, encouraging appropriate volunteer attitudes, valuing volunteering, sustainability, solidarity, and the importance of contributing to development.

Background

The Code has been developed in close consultation with Irish sending organisations and through engagement with a range of projects that host international volunteers.

Implementation of the Code

Signatories to the Code of Good Practice have agreed to follow a three-step implementation model. This involves: (1) signing up to the Code; (2) completing a self-audit; and (3) using peer support to ensure that all organisations are able to implement the principles. This document sets out a self-audit tool that is designed to assist organisations with assessing their adherence to the principles.

How to use the Code's self-audit tool

The Code sets out 11 different principles that incorporate all aspects of volunteer programmes, from initial programme design through to volunteer debriefing. It covers the following topics: volunteer programme design; volunteer programme financing and support; marketing and imagery; information provision for volunteers; recruitment procedures; support needs of volunteers; training and induction for volunteers; health, safety and security; recognition for volunteers; programme monitoring and evaluation; and debriefing for volunteers.

- **Step 1:** Each of these principles is accompanied by a list of **indicators**, which are ways of showing that an organisation is implementing the main points covered in the principles. A list of **possible evidence** is also provided for each indicator. Organisations should read through both the indicators and the possible evidence, to get an idea of the different ways they can assess whether they are implementing the various aspects of the principle.
- **Step 2:** Space is set out for organisations to note the type of evidence they have to show compliance with the different indicators (**Evidence Provided** column), and to list any areas that may need to be addressed or improved on (**Areas to be Addressed** column). A **Next Steps** column provides space in which to note what, if anything, needs to be done to progress the implementation of the indicator.

Organisations should fill out these three columns. It is important to remember that the list of possible evidence for each indicator is only included as a guideline, and is not comprehensive.

- **Step 3:** After filling in these columns, organisations can then look at the self-audit tool¹. This tool, also known as Checkpoints, provides a means of measuring how close an organisation is to implementing the Code's principles. It also helps to highlight any places in which improvement is needed. On completing the self-audit tool, please record the date of completion. This will provide a record against which progress can be reviewed at a later date. **Organisations are requested to undertake the audit process twice during the year**, to allow them to assess their progress with implementation.

- **Step 4:** The final step to assist with the implementation of the Code is the list of courses and resources set out at the end of each principle. These have been identified as providing useful information and assistance that will help organisations to make sure that the various principles are upheld.

Further information

Organisations that are conducting the self-audit process are encouraged to make a note of any issues or difficulties they may come across, and to pass this information on to Comhlámh. Both the Code and self-audit tool will be subject to revision, and feedback from organisations involved in the implementation process will be crucial for this. A comment form to assist with this process is included at the end of the Code, and organisations are requested to complete this and send it back to Comhlámh.

Additionally, Comhlámh's Volunteering Options programme will provide support and advice for organisations throughout the process. This includes the provision of a dedicated section on the Volunteering Options website, which is available for all signatories to the Code. Organisations are encouraged to use this to either post or download useful resources, and to access other relevant data. For further information, please go to www.volunteeringoptions.org.

¹The self-audit tool is based on the work of George Varnava with the former Forum on Children and Violence, National Children's Bureau, and has been adapted by the NSPCC as an audit tool for child protection. The approach used in this Code also draws on the work of the Keeping Children Safe Coalition, as set out in its toolkit, *Keeping Children Safe: Standards for Child Protection*. Comhlámh is grateful to George Varnava and the Keeping Children Safe Coalition for their kind permission to use the tool for this Code.

All signatories to the Code agree to uphold the following principles:

- 1) **Have volunteer programmes based on realistic aims and objectives with appropriate and useful volunteer roles;**
- 2) **Provide sufficient resources and support to run volunteer programmes in an efficient and sustainable manner;**
- 3) **Provide marketing and imagery consistent with good practice, and clear expressions of organisational aims, ethos and values;**
- 4) **Provide potential volunteers with free, fair and unbiased information on their organisation and volunteer placements;**
- 5) **Use fair, consistent and transparent recruitment procedures²;**
- 6) **Assist and provide for the varying support needs of volunteers;**
- 7) **Ensure that volunteers participate in appropriate preparation, training and induction;**
- 8) **Ensure the protection, safety and well being of volunteers and those they work with, as far as possible;**
- 9) **Provide recognition for volunteers;**
- 10) **Provide ongoing monitoring and evaluation; and**
- 11) **Provide debriefing to returned volunteers.**

² Please see *People in Aid's Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel* (www.peopleinaid.org) for further information on recruitment, health, safety and security issues. Comhlámh is grateful to People in Aid for their kind permission to adapt some of the indicators from their Code.

Organisations agree to have volunteer programmes based on realistic aims and objectives with appropriate and useful volunteer roles.

Rationale:

In many developed countries, there is a demand from the public for overseas volunteer placements. This principle aims to ensure that host projects participate in programme planning and development, so that programmes fit with local needs and requirements and volunteers have useful, rewarding placements that address relevant needs.

Indicator	Possible evidence	Evidence provided	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
<p>I) The organisation holds meetings and/or communicates on a regular basis with host projects about project design and implementation</p>	<p>Minutes from meetings between sending and host organisations; Copies of other communications, including emails, relating to volunteer placement planning, such as monthly updates and quarterly reports.</p>			
<p>II) As far as possible, the organisation involves host organisations in volunteer recruitment and selection</p>	<p>Copies of inter-organisation communications, including emails, relating to volunteer recruitment and selection</p>			
<p>III) The organisation takes part in meetings and/or evaluations with host projects about their experiences with volunteers</p>	<p>Minutes from relevant meetings; Evaluation forms or other notes relating to the monitoring of volunteer placements.</p>			
<p>IV) Using feedback from these consultations, volunteer roles are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain appropriate, useful and achievable</p>	<p>Examples of ways in which feedback has been incorporated into programme revisions and developments; Samples of volunteer role descriptions, noting any changes that have taken place as a result of feedback; Copies of project plans/strategic plans that outline the role of the volunteer; Copies of agreements/ Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between sending and host orgs.</p>			

After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is:
A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.

	A – In place	B – Partially	C – Not in place
1	Volunteer programmes are based on realistic aims and objectives with appropriate and useful volunteer roles		
I	The organisation holds meetings and/or communicates on a regular basis with host projects about project design and implementation		
II	As far as possible, the organisation involves host organisations in volunteer recruitment and selection		
III	The organisation takes part in meetings and/or evaluations with host projects about their experiences with volunteers		
IV	Using feedback from these consultations, volunteer roles are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain appropriate, useful and achievable		

Training and other resources available to support implementation:

- Carmichael Centre Leadership & Governance training programme. See www.carmichaelcentre.ie for further information.
- Dtalk course, "Learning to Measure and Assess Impact" and "Partnerships in Development". See www.dtalk.ie for further information.
- Education for Development is a "small international organisation that works with Vietnamese partners to improve and expand their services for disadvantaged children".
- A Volunteer Management Manual, including suggestions for interviewing and recruiting volunteers, is available to download at www.educationfordevelopment.org/publications.htm.
- This contains a theoretical component ("Establishing your Volunteer Programme") and a practical component ("Tools for Managing Volunteers").
- Planning a Programme, Council of Europe's Training Kit on International Voluntary Service, available at: www.training-youth.net/INTEGRATION/TY/Publications/tkits/tkit5/tkit5.pdf.

Organisations agree to provide sufficient resources and support to run volunteer programmes in an efficient and sustainable manner.

Rationale

It is necessary that budgets for programmes are sufficient to ensure that these programmes are well-run, including providing local well trained in-country staff. Budgets should also contribute extra resources to facilitate host projects' growth in a sustainable manner, thus allowing them to provide services to local communities outside their volunteer programmes.

Indicator	Possible evidence	Evidence provided	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
I) Programme plans and budgets explicitly note how resources and support are provided to host projects for programmes that are efficient and sustainable	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and support provided to host projects.			
II) Annual plans/project plans set out any relevant training supports provided for staff in host projects	Copies of annual reports and project plans; Copies of MOUs/agreements between host and sending orgs.			
III) Ongoing consultation takes place with host projects to identify key areas for which resources are required, and this feeds into programme planning and design	Minutes from meetings, or records (including emails) from other consultations; Examples of the incorporation of feedback from consultations into programme planning and design.			
IV) Where volunteer training and induction are provided by host projects, they are aware of their role and are supported in carrying this out	Copies of training and induction programmes, where the role of host projects is clearly set out, including who has responsibility for each part of the training; Lists of people to whom this information has been sent; Copies of budgets that include a breakdown of funding provided to support training and induction carried out by host projects.			

After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is: A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.

	A - In place	B - Partially	C - Not in place
2	Sufficient resources and support to run volunteer programmes in an efficient and sustainable manner have been provided		
I	Programme plans and budgets explicitly note how resources and support are provided to host projects for programmes that are efficient and sustainable		
II	Annual plans/project plans set out any relevant training supports provided for staff in host projects		
III	Ongoing consultation takes place with host projects to identify key areas for which resources are required, and this feeds into programme planning and design		
IV	Where volunteer training and induction are provided by host projects, they are aware of their role and are supported in carrying this out		

Training and other resources available to support implementation

- Dtalk “Financial Management and Project Funding”, “Basic Financial Accounting”, “Proposal Development and Grant Management” and “Financial Management and Project Funding” courses. See www.dtalk.ie.
- Carmichael Centre support services, including on setting up an organisation. See www.carmichaelcentre.ie.
- Mango is a UK-based agency that works to help aid agencies and NGOs to strengthen their financial management systems – see www.mango.org.uk/ for further information.

Provide marketing and imagery consistent with good practice, and clear expressions of organisational aims, ethos and values.

Rationale

This principle aims to ensure that sending organisations do not make false claims as to the efficacy and effects of their programmes, or the extent to which volunteers can 'make a difference' to the lives of the people in host communities. By being clear about their aims, values and ethos, organisations will also help volunteers to see whether they are in agreement with them. Additionally, the principle aims to make sure that host projects are portrayed pictorially in a positive manner.

Indicator	Possible evidence	Evidence provided	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
I) Any promotional material relating to the recruitment of volunteers clearly sets out the aims, ethos and values of the organisation	Copies of promotional materials (brochures, pamphlets and leaflets, website, books, ads in print and other media, posters, billboards, etc).			
II) In promotional materials, the volunteer's role is clearly and simply stated in a manner that will not raise unrealistic expectations about what the placement can achieve	Copies of promotional materials (brochures, pamphlets and leaflets, website, books, ads in print and other media, posters, billboards, etc).			
III) When possible, consultation takes place with host projects about promotional materials	Minutes or other records from meetings with host projects regarding promotional materials; Examples of the incorporation of this feedback into changes to promotional materials.			
IV) The organisation supports the development and implementation of guidelines on good practice relating to marketing and imagery	Record of staff participation in training on the use of images; Copy of organisation's guidelines on marketing and imagery, and examples of organisation's use of imagery in materials; Examples of engagement with initiatives to promote good practice, eg, Dóchas guidelines.			
V) For any external fundraising activities, the organisation provides guidelines on marketing and imagery consistent with internal guidelines	Copy of organisation's guidelines on marketing and imagery, including guidelines for external fundraising.			

After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is:
A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.

3	Provide marketing and imagery consistent with good practice, and clear expressions of organisational aims, ethos and values	A – In place	B - Partially	C – Not in place
I	Promotional material relating to the recruitment of volunteers clearly sets out the aims, ethos and values of the organisation			
II	In promotional materials, the volunteer's role is clearly and simply stated in a manner that will not raise unrealistic expectations about what the placement can achieve			
III	When possible, consultation takes place with host projects about promotional materials			
IV	The organisation supports the development and implementation of guidelines on good practice relating to marketing and imagery			
V	For any external fundraising activities, the organisation provides guidelines on marketing and imagery consistent with internal guidelines			

Training and other resources available to support implementation

- Comhlámh's "Images and Development" workshop, designed specifically for volunteer sending organisations (www.comhlamh.org).
- Dóchas Code of Good Practice on Images and Messages. Further information is available at www.dochas.ie/resources05f.htm.

Provide potential volunteers with free, fair and unbiased information on their organisation and volunteer placements.

Rationale:

This principle encourages sending organisations to provide potential volunteers with lists of independent resources on volunteering overseas, in order to encourage informed decision-making. Access to returned volunteers can also assist potential volunteers in their decision making, and ideally enable them to learn more about their host country and placement.

Indicator	Possible evidence	Evidence available	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
I) The organisation provides unmediated access to former volunteers (subject to data protection regulations and consent)	A database of returned volunteers who are willing to talk to potential volunteers; Information on systems in place to facilitate contact between outgoing volunteers and returned volunteers; Inputs from returned volunteers at training or information events.			
II) The organisation offers access to other sources of information about volunteering	Links from organisation's website to other sources of information about volunteering; Copy of information pack sent in response to queries about volunteering opportunities; Briefing notes for staff responding to inquiries about volunteering that includes information on links to other sources of information.			
III) Where possible, the organisation has a liaison person within the host project who responds to queries from confirmed volunteers	Role description for contact person within host project who is responsible for liaison with volunteers.			

After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is:
A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.

4	Provide potential volunteers with free, fair and unbiased information on their organisation and volunteer placements	A – In place	B – Partially	C – Not in place
I	The organisation provides unmediated access to former volunteers (subject to data protection regulations and consent)			
II	The organisation offers access to other sources of information about volunteering			
III	Where possible, the organisation has a liaison person within the host project who responds to queries from confirmed volunteers			

Training and other resources available to support implementation

- Comhíamh's Volunteering Options website and *Working for a Better World: A Guide to Volunteering in Global Development*. See www.volunteeringoptions.org for more information.

Use fair, consistent and transparent recruitment procedures³

Rationale

This aims to encourage organisations to have standardised selection procedures, which are made clear to volunteers from the outset.

Indicators	Possible evidence	Evidence available	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
I) The organisation has written policies and procedures that set out how volunteers are recruited and selected	Copy of recruitment and selection policy; Written examples of how this is publicised to potential volunteers.			
II) The organisation has clear criteria in terms of skills and abilities needed, against which it assesses volunteers' suitability for particular roles	Copies of lists of skills and abilities required for volunteer roles.			
III) The organisation gives responses to candidates regarding their selection/non-selection for posts, and provides feedback about the recruitment process, if requested.	Copy of template for responding to candidates who apply for volunteer positions.			
IV) The organisation uses recruitment policies that reflect a commitment to promoting inclusiveness and diversity, complying with the spirit of Irish equality legislation.	Copy of organisation's equality policy; Copy of recruitment and advertising strategies; Record of staff participation in training on equality and diversity.			

³ Please see *People in Aid's Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel* (Principle 5) for further information and details about recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers (www.peopleinaid.org).

After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is: A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.

5	Use fair, consistent and transparent recruitment procedures	A – In place	B – Partially	C – Not in place
I	The organisation has written policies and procedures that set out how volunteers are recruited and selected			
II	The organisation has clear criteria in terms of skills and abilities needed, against which it assesses volunteers' suitability for particular roles			
III	The organisation gives responses to candidates regarding their selection/non-selection for posts, and provides feedback about the recruitment process, if requested.			
IV	The organisation uses recruitment policies that reflect a commitment to promoting inclusiveness and diversity, complying with the spirit of Irish equality legislation.			

Training and other resources available to support implementation

- Volunteering Ireland Volunteering Management course, Effective Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers course. See www.volunteeringireland.ie/page.php?id=73 for more info.
- Equal Status Act, Employment Equality Act, relevant Equality Authority guidelines and publications. More info is available at www.equality.ie.
- Carmichael Centre Customer Care for Voluntary Organisations course (www.carmichaelcentre.ie).
- Volunteer Organisers Linking Together (VOLT), "VOLT Working Group Report on Volunteer Vetting and Volunteer Screening", June 2004. Copies available through Volunteering Ireland or Comhíamh.

Assist and provide for the varying support needs of volunteers.

Rationale:

This principle aims to encourage sending organisations to provide support to volunteers, such as one-to-one or group support sessions. The existence of these supports should be made apparent to volunteers from the start of their engagement with the organisation.

Indicator	Possible evidence	Evidence available	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
I) The organisation has a written policy that sets out the training and support services that volunteers can expect, including any in-country support provided	Copy of written policy outlining training and support services; Examples of ways in which this policy is advertised to volunteers (eg, through web sites, brochures, and other publications); Induction checklist/schedule; copy of volunteer manual/handbook.			
II) Where relevant, managers or other pertinent staff receive training in assessing the support needs of volunteers, to facilitate them within their placements	List of persons responsible for assessing support needs of volunteers; Record of staff training in supporting volunteers.			
III) Induction and briefing specific to each role is given to all volunteers (pre-departure and/or in-country)	Induction and briefing checklist/schedule for each volunteer role; Attendance lists/signed forms indicating volunteers' participation in induction and briefing; Copy of volunteer manual/handbook.			
IV) Access to ongoing mentoring and/or support is available for volunteers throughout their placements.	Written outline of how mentoring/support services for volunteers operate; Copy of volunteer manual /handbook; List of designated mentors, or copy of contact details for support personnel.			

After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is: A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.

6	Assist and provide for the varying support needs of volunteers	A – In place	B – Partially	C – Not in place
I	The organisation has a written policy that sets out the training and support services that volunteers can expect, including any in-country support provided			
II	Where relevant, managers or other pertinent staff receive training in assessing the support needs of volunteers, to facilitate them within their placements			
III	Induction and briefing specific to each role is given to all volunteers (pre-departure and/or in-country)			
IV	Access to ongoing mentoring and/or support is available for volunteers throughout their placements.			

Training and other resources available to support implementation

- Volunteering Ireland “Volunteering Management” course, “Developing Your Volunteer Policy” course (www.volunteeringireland.ie)
- Equality Authority documentation and publications (www.equality.ie)
- Dtalk programmes including Creative Facilitation; Critical Incident Stress Management; How to be a successful trainer; Leadership and Team Building; Managing from a Distance (www.dtalk.ie)
- Education for Development’s Volunteer Management Manual, available to download at www.educationfordevelopment.org/publications.htm
- The Free Management Library has a section entitled “Information on Developing and Managing Volunteer Programmes”. Its links are often more relevant for domestic volunteering, and to the situation in North America, but some of the articles may be of use. See www.managementhelp.org/staffing/outsrcng/volntee/volntee.htm for more details.

Ensure that volunteers participate in appropriate preparation, training and induction.

Rationale:

This principle encourages organisations to review their training and induction needs, and to produce a training policy. Training can be provided in-house or by outside agencies, or a mix of both. It may also be provided pre-departure or in-country.

Indicators	Possible evidence	Evidence available	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
I) The organisation has clear guidelines for staff and volunteers relating to all parts of their preparation, training and induction programmes.	Written copy of guidelines on volunteer preparation, training and induction; Training and induction manuals/other materials; Copy of volunteer manual/handbook.			
II) The organisation has clearly allocated responsibility for who will provide the training/induction (in-house or outsourced)	List of internal training and staff responsible for its provision; List of outsourced training; List of in-country training and staff responsible for its provision.			
III) Training and induction are mandatory for volunteers, who sign a completion form to indicate their participation in these	Copies of completion forms signed by volunteers.			
IV) As far as possible, host projects are involved in the development of training materials	Notes from consultations with host projects about training design and development.			
V) Preparation, training and induction programmes are regularly reviewed, and feedback is used to inform any necessary changes.	Copies of evaluation and monitoring forms for preparation, training and induction programmes; Written examples of how this has been used to inform programme development.			
VI) The organisation provides copies of the Volunteer Charter for volunteers	Evidence of distribution of Volunteer Charter (eg, through links on the website, included in induction or information packs).			

After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is:
A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.

7	Ensure that volunteers participate in appropriate preparation, training and induction	A – In place	B – Partially	C – Not in place
I	The organisation has clear guidelines for staff and volunteers relating to all parts of their preparation, training and induction programmes.			
II	The organisation has clearly allocated responsibility for who will provide the training/induction (in-house or outsourced)			
III	Training and induction are mandatory for volunteers, who sign a completion form to indicate their participation in these			
IV	As far as possible, host projects are involved in the development of training materials			
V	Preparation, training and induction programmes are regularly reviewed, and feedback is used to inform any necessary changes.			
VI	The organisation provides copies of the Volunteer Charter for volunteers			

Training and other resources available to support implementation

- Volunteering Ireland “Volunteering Management” course, “Volunteer Support and Supervision” course (www.volunteeringireland.ie).
- Comhlámh’s Volunteer Charter, available from www.volunteeringoptions.org.
- Comhlámh and Volunteering Ireland course on volunteer support, designed for sending organisations: [contact info@volunteeringoptions.org](mailto:contactinfo@volunteeringoptions.org) for further details.
- Volunteer Centres Ireland, *Developing a Volunteer Policy guide*, available at www.volunteer.ie.
- Education for Development’s Volunteer Management Manual, available at www.educationfordevelopment.org/publications.htm.
- Dtalk “Initial Preparation” course, www.dtalk.ie.

Ensure the protection, safety and well being of volunteers and those they work with as far as possible⁴

Rationale

Provision is made in this principle for the drawing up of policies to ensure the protection of volunteers from potential harm, and from potentially harming others.

Indicators	Possible evidence	Evidence available	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
I) The organisation has written policies for volunteers relating to security, individual health, and health and safety	Copy of policies on security, individual health, and health and safety.			
II) Policies relating to security, individual health, and health and safety are disseminated to volunteers and host organisations	Inclusion of copies of policies on security, individual health, and health and safety in info packs for volunteers and host organisations.			
III) Programme plans include written assessments of security, travel and health risks specific to the country or region, which are periodically reviewed	Written assessment of security, travel and health risks for each placement; Examples of how these assessments are monitored and updated.			
IV) The organisation ensures that volunteers are informed of the need for relevant medical and travel insurance, whether organised by the volunteer or the organisation	Written information for volunteers about the organisation's policy on medical and travel insurance; Outline of referral system to relevant service providers.			
V) The organisation requests a certificate of fitness to travel and references for all volunteers	Copies of procedures for getting certificates of fitness; Copies of procedures for seeking references.			

⁴Some of these indicators have been adapted from *People in Aid's Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel* (Principle7). For further information and details about the health, safety and security of volunteers, please see www.peopleinaid.org.

VI) Training in working with children and vulnerable adults is provided for all volunteers, where relevant. Any available forms of Garda clearance are also requested, where relevant	Copy of organisation's child protection policy; Evidence of applications for Garda clearance.			
VII) Volunteers are informed about how to protect their interests within the social welfare and pensions systems whilst overseas	Copy of information about protection of interests that is provided to volunteers.			
VIII) Records are maintained of placement-related injuries, sickness, accidents and fatalities, which are monitored to help assess and reduce future risk to volunteers	Template for keeping records of placement-related health difficulties.			

**After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is:
A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.**

8	Ensure the protection, safety and well-being of volunteers and those they work with as far as possible	A - In place	B - Partially	C - Not in place
I	The organisation has written policies for volunteers relating to security, individual health, and health and safety			
II	Policies relating to security, individual health, and health and safety are disseminated to volunteers and host organisations			
III	Programme plans include written assessments of security, travel and health risks specific to the country or region, which are periodically reviewed			
IV	The organisation ensures that volunteers are informed of the need for relevant medical and travel insurance, whether organised by the volunteer or the organisation			
V	The organisation requests a certificate of fitness to travel and references for all volunteers			
VI	Training in working with children and vulnerable adults is provided for all volunteers, where relevant. Any available forms of Garda clearance are also requested, where relevant			
VII	Volunteers are informed about how to protect their interests within the Irish social welfare and pensions systems whilst overseas			
VIII	Records are maintained of placement-related injuries, sickness, accidents and fatalities, which are monitored to help assess and reduce future risk to volunteers			

Training and other resources available to support implementation

- Volunteering Ireland “Volunteering Management” course (see www.volunteeringireland.ie).
- Dtalk “Critical Incident Stress Management” course (www.dtalk.ie).
- David Lloyd Roberts: “Staying Alive: Safety and Security Guidelines for Humanitarian Volunteers in Conflict Areas”, ICRC, 2005. This resource can be downloaded at [www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900SID/RURI-6LJUCY/\\$FILE/icrc-safety-30jan.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900SID/RURI-6LJUCY/$FILE/icrc-safety-30jan.pdf?OpenElement).
- Volunteer Organisers Linking Together (VOLT), “VOLT Working Group Report on Volunteer Vetting and Volunteer Screening”, June 2004.
- Dept of Health and Children, “Our Duty to Care: the principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people”, (2002), available at www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/ourduty.pdf.
- The Keeping Children Safe Coalition comprises a number of aid and development agencies that work together to share experience and knowledge and to identify a common approach to child protection. They have developed a range of resources and tools on the topic, available at www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk.
- Comhámh’s services for development workers and volunteers includes the provision of advice on social welfare entitlements and pensions; see the *Services to Returned Development Workers and Volunteers* leaflet and www.comhamh.org for further information.

Provide recognition for volunteers

Rationale

Volunteers should be recognised, both formally and informally, as being of value and importance.

Indicator	Possible evidence	Evidence available	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
I) The organisation recognises volunteers' contributions through events for returned volunteers or other public occasions, promotional materials, newsletters, or further publicity for their work	Copies of any of the organisation's materials in which the contribution of volunteers is recorded; Examples of any of the organisation's celebratory events for volunteers			
II) The organisation provides volunteers with a statement or certificate of service or a reference	Template for statement or certificate of service, or for references			

After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is: A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.

9	Provide recognition for volunteers	A - In place	B - Partially	C - Not in place
I	The organisation recognises volunteers' contributions through events for returned volunteers or other public occasions, promotional materials, newsletters, or further publicity for their work			
II	The organisation provides volunteers with a statement or certificate of service or a reference			

Training and other resources available to support implementation

- Volunteering Ireland "Volunteer Support and Supervision" course, "Motivating Volunteers" course (www.volunteeringireland.ie).
- A list of 100 ideas for ways to provide recognition for volunteers is available on the Volunteering Ireland website at www.volunteeringireland.ie/page.php?id=5.

10

Principle

Provide ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Rationale

This principle reflects the fact that monitoring and evaluation are an important means of measuring the effectiveness of any programme.

Indicators	Possible evidence	Evidence available	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
I) The organisation makes provision for regular monitoring and evaluation of volunteers' experiences in programmes	Copy of monitoring and evaluation forms, or other methodologies, used to capture volunteers' experiences.			
II) The organisation makes provision for monitoring and evaluating host projects' experiences of placement programmes	Copy of monitoring and evaluation forms, or other methodologies, used to capture host projects' experiences.			
III) Feedback from monitoring and evaluation exercises is used to inform project revisions and developments	Examples of ways in which feedback has been used to contribute to project development.			

After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is: A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.

10	Provide ongoing monitoring and evaluation	A - In place	B - Partially	C - Not in place
I	The organisation makes provision for regular monitoring and evaluation of volunteers' experiences in programmes			
II	The organisation makes provision for monitoring and evaluating host projects' experiences of placement programmes			
III	Feedback from monitoring and evaluation exercises is used to inform project revisions and developments			

Training and other resources available to support implementation:

- Dtalk "How to Measure and Assess Impact" course, further details available at www.dtalk.ie.
- Carmichael Centre "Monitoring and Evaluation" course < www.carmichaelcentre.ie >.
- Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit – available to purchase from the Volunteering England site, www.volunteering.org.uk.
- ServiceLeader.org is a site that contains resources for volunteer managers, including "Measuring the Difference Volunteers Make: A Guide to Outcome Evaluation for Volunteer Programme Managers", which is available at www.serviceleader.org/new/documents/articles/2005/03/000255.php .

11

Principle

Provide debriefing for returned volunteers.

Rationale:

Debriefing is an important part of any volunteer placement. It allows volunteers to reflect on their experiences and pass on their knowledge, in addition to which it gives the organisation the opportunity to acknowledge the role of the individual and to both give and receive feedback.

Indicator	Possible evidence	Evidence available	Areas to be addressed	Next steps
I) The organisation ensures that all volunteers have access to debriefing and/or an exit interview at the end of their placement. This can be provided in-house or by an external organisation	Copy of organisation's policy on debriefing/exit interviews; Reference from organisation's volunteer policy manual or other materials for volunteers to debriefing and/or exit interviews; List of persons responsible for providing debriefing (internal or external).			
II) The organisation ensures that relevant staff receive training in debriefing, reorientation, and providing information on referrals for counselling	List of staff who have participated in training on debriefing and reorientation; List of links to any of the organisation's external contacts that provide debriefing or reorientation for returned volunteers; Copy of procedures for providing referrals for counselling.			

**After looking at the evidence available in relation to each indicator, please decide and select on the chart whether the indicator is:
A - in place; B - partially completed; or C - not in place.**

11	Provide debriefing for returned volunteers	A	B	C
I	The organisation ensures that all volunteers have access to debriefing and/or an exit interview at the end of their placement. This can be provided in-house or by an external organisation			
II	The organisation ensures that relevant staff receive training in debriefing, reorientation, and providing information on referrals for counselling			

Training and other resources available to support implementation:

- Dtalk debriefing training and CISM training (www.dtalk.ie).
- Comhlámh Moving Forward days and Coming Home Weekends (www.comhlamh.org).

Comments on the Code and self-audit tool

To help ensure that the Code is as useful, realistic and implementable as possible, please fill out this form and send a copy to Comhlámh on completion of the self-audit process. Comments on all aspects of the Code, from its content to the usability of the self-audit tool to suggestions for possible improvements, are welcomed.

Principle	Comments arising from self-audit process
1: Organisations agree to have volunteer programmes based on realistic aims and objectives with appropriate and useful volunteer roles.	
2: Organisations agree to provide sufficient resources and support to run volunteer programmes in an efficient and sustainable manner.	
3: Provide marketing and imagery consistent with good practice, and clear expressions of organisational aims, ethos and values.	
4: Provide potential volunteers with free, fair and unbiased information on their organisation and volunteer placements.	
5: Use fair, consistent and transparent recruitment procedures	
6: Assist and provide for the varying support needs of volunteers.	
7: Ensure that volunteers participate in appropriate preparation, training and induction.	
8: Ensure the protection, safety and well being of volunteers and those they work with as far as possible	
9: Provide recognition for volunteers	
10: Provide ongoing monitoring and evaluation	
11: Provide debriefing for returned volunteers	

Organisation's name:

Date:



Established in 1975, Comhlámh is a member and supporter organisation open to anyone interested in social justice, human rights and global development issues.

Our Volunteering Options programme works to encourage responsive, responsive overseas volunteering and aims to support volunteers in a long-term, ongoing commitment to development. Further information about the programme is available at www.volunteeringoptions.org.

To find out more about joining Comhlámh and supporting our work, please visit www.comhlamh.org or call 01-478 3490. Your membership can help us campaign for a better and more just world.



Irish Aid

Department of Foreign Affairs
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha

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