**How to set up a successful meeting with your MP**

*These tips have been put together by our Parliamentary Relations team, who have set up many meetings with MPs. If you’d like some further support, please contact Eden via* *eden.kulig@vsoint.org**.*

**Before the meeting**

* Find out who your MP is by inputting your postcode to a website such as[https://www.theyworkforyou.com](https://www.theyworkforyou.com/)
* As a constituent, you have the right to speak with your MP about any issue you would like, or to request that they write to a Minister on your behalf. MPs meet people every week who want to discuss a range of topics with them – they are used to being lobbied and there’s no need to be intimidated!
* Contact your MP to request a meeting, making sure to include your full name and postcode so they know you are a constituent. Explain that you have returned from volunteering abroad and would like to discuss your experiences and priorities with them. An email to your MP’s office should be fine, but you may want to chase up with a phone call if you do not receive a response. Please let Eden know if a meeting is confirmed.
* Before the meeting, print out some photos from your time volunteering and make some notes to remind yourself of the key points you want to make.

**During the meeting**

* Take a few minutes to describe your time volunteering overseas – the projects you worked on and the impact you felt you had, and if it has changed your outlook since your return to the UK.
* If you are a returned ICS volunteer, ask the MP if they have met with an ICS alumni before, or whether they had any prior knowledge of the scheme.
* If you feel comfortable, you can ask your MP if they support Britain’s current international development commitments, such as spending 0.7% on aid, and supporting the Sustainable Development Goals. Do make a note of their response, as this is really valuable information for us at VSO.
* You may also want to talk about any other issues you are passionate about – explain to the MP why the issue matters to you, and ask for some information about anything they have done in Parliament on the matter. You can also ask your MP to write to a Minister on any subject on your behalf.
* It’s helpful to end the meeting by making a request of the MP. You could ask if they would be happy for you to take a photo of the meeting, and whether they would be willing to tweet about it with an expression of support. You could also ask if they would write to the relevant Minister about the Sustainable Development Goals.

**After the meeting**

* Send Eden details of your meeting with the MP, and any photos that were taken.
* Using this content, we may be able to organise some local press coverage of the meeting, which all helps to publicise and make the case for the value of international volunteering.