



The Global Standard for Volunteering for Development

OCTOBER 2019



Foreword

As the Forum Board, representing a range of Volunteering for Development organisations, we are proud to launch the Global Standard for Volunteering for Development.

Now more than ever, there is a global need for organisations like ourselves to work alongside people in poor, marginalised or less developed communities, partnering with them to improve their quality of life, their own capacities, address the significant challenges facing them, and embrace opportunities for the future. Volunteering organisations can be at the forefront of supporting these improvements; but to be impactful, our activities must be responsible, well-planned, transparent and respectful, and based on genuine partnerships and measurable outcomes. The Global Standard supports organisations in all this – to be impactful, responsible and outcomes-focused.

We believe that this Global Standard, which was developed through the collective knowledge and experience of Forum members and the broader sector, will strengthen the work of all Forum members and volunteer-involving organisations, providing guidance and reassurance that will also assist the broader Volunteering for Development community with their work. Meeting the Global Standard will strengthen outcomes, support the Sustainable Development Goals and provide care and protection for volunteers and the people and communities with whom they work.

Our aim is that all volunteer-involving organisations, whether they are Forum members or not, adopt, embrace and learn from the use of the Global Standard to create a new global level of excellence in Responsible and Impactful Volunteering for Development.

We acknowledge and thank the many hundreds of experts and interested individuals and organisations who have contributed to the development of this Global Standard. It has been an extensive participatory process that has tested thinking, values and practices and, as a result, reflects the best approaches to Volunteering for Development.

Through the Global Standard, Forum looks forward to working with all organisations that involve volunteers in supporting the development needs of communities.

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Introduction

“An important consideration in constructing the standards has been that they encourage uptake, that they are relevant to all volunteering-involving organisations whatever their size and wherever they are located in the world, and that most importantly, they clearly help organisations contribute towards the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

- Dr Philip Goodwin, VSO CEO and Forum Board member

The International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum) has developed the Global Standard for Volunteering for Development (the Global Standard) to help organisations understand and deliver Responsible and Impactful Volunteering, and to encourage learning and continuous improvement in development projects involving volunteers. The Global Standard will benefit any organisations that respond to a community need by providing or supporting volunteers.

Forum has four aims: to share information, to research key contemporary issues, to develop good practice and to enhance cooperation and support among its members. Offering the Volunteering for Development sector a Quality Standard is part of the Forum Strategy 2015-2020, helping to deliver each of these aims, and fills a gap identified by the group of Forum Members who took leadership of the project to develop the Global Standard:

“[This Global Standard] will address the problem that there is no globally recognised set of good practice standards that focus on Volunteering for Development, or on good practice for volunteer-involving organisations. [It] will lead to more responsible and impactful volunteering, and to greater confidence from potential volunteers and the wider public in organisations that adhere to the standards”.

- Forum Leading Standards Working Group

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

Further details of the development process, and the background to the Global Standard, can be read in the Framing Paper written for IVCO 2019 available at <https://forum-ids.org/research/>.

The Global Standard upholds the principles of Volunteering for Development by prioritising community needs over volunteer development. While acknowledging the needs that volunteers have and the technical, relational and soft skills they bring to Volunteering for Development, the Global Standard focuses on an organisation's operational work – its development and delivery of impactful projects and its accountability to local communities, partners (sending or hosting) and volunteers. It does not provide support on organisational capacity-strengthening, for example on staff management, financial ethics or an organisation's environmental policy.

For further information on how your organisation can meet the Global Standard, please see <https://forum-ids.org/about/standard/> or contact Forum.



The Global Standard for Volunteering for Development

The Global Standard for Volunteering for Development is a standard of practice that volunteer-involving organisations can choose to adopt in order to align themselves with a global standard of excellence. It has been agreed globally, by several hundred stakeholders from across the Volunteering for Development sector.

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

The following definitions constitute central pillars of the Global Standard:

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

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

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

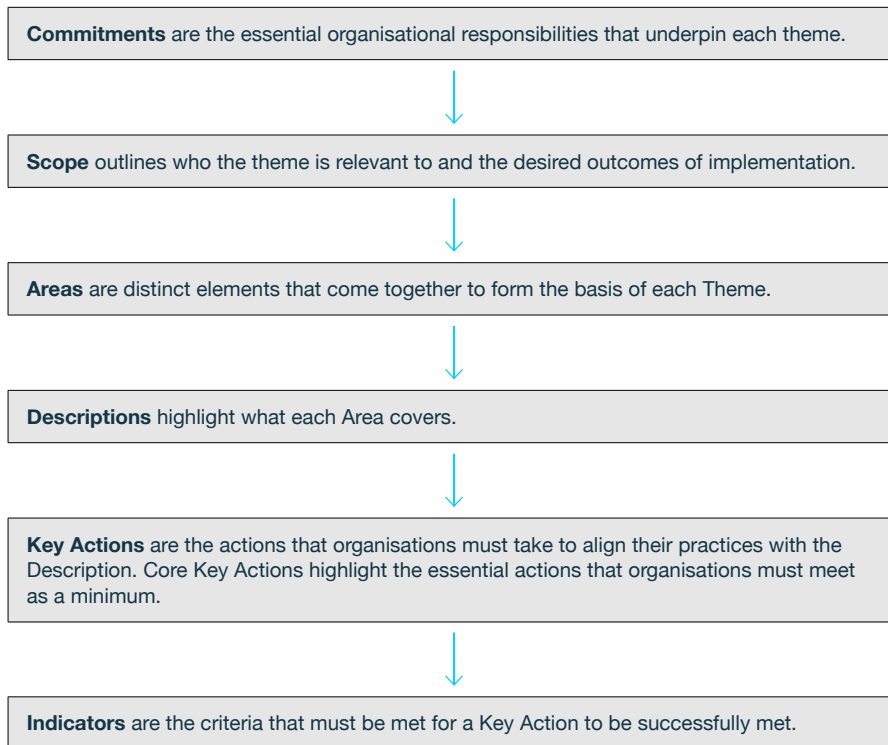


How to Use the Standard

The Global Standard is divided into four interconnected **Themes**, which were prioritised by Forum Members during the consultation. These are:

1	2
Designing and Delivering Projects	Duty of Care
3	4
Managing Volunteers	Measuring Impact

Each **Theme** contains the same hierarchy of constituent parts: **Commitment, Scope, Area, Description, Key Actions** and **Indicators**. Each of these parts is reliant on the others.



The Global Standard is based on the following principles:

Do no harm: The principle that organisations should prevent any negative effects they may inadvertently cause through providing a volunteer or service to a community.

Rights-Based Approach: The idea of approaching development, and in this case volunteering, based on human rights standards that go beyond ‘charity’ and focus on empowering people to know and claim their rights. This means designing and delivering projects to promote and protect human rights. This approach is about the root causes of development problems, which have inequality, discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power at their heart. To ensure volunteering does not add to these root causes and its contributions are sustainable, it should be anchored in the fulfilment of human rights.

Responsible and Impactful Volunteering: These terms are defined in the Global Standard, and the Global Standard is constructed so that organisations meeting the Global Standard can say with confidence that they are delivering Responsible and Impactful Volunteering.

Safeguarding: The responsibility that an organisation has to ensure that their employees, volunteers, associates, operations and projects do not do harm to children and other vulnerable people – that they do not expose them to the risk of discrimination, neglect, exploitation, harm and abuse and that any concerns the organisation has about children and vulnerable people within the communities in which they work are reported to the appropriate authorities. It is also the responsibility that the organisation has for protecting its employees, volunteers and associates when they are vulnerable, for example, when ill or at risk of harm or abuse.



1. Designing and Delivering Projects

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

Scope: This must be met by any organisation or partner that has a role in designing or delivering Volunteering for Development activities. It provides a framework for the impactful and responsible design and delivery of these activities throughout the project cycle.



Area 1: Design and Planning

Description: The design and planning of a responsible and impactful Volunteering for Development project ensures the project fits into broader development objectives, is led by members of the local community and will ‘do no harm’.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1	Build a strong relationship between partners to ensure strong capacity and local presence.	<p>1a Partners are assessed using a due diligence check to ensure capacity and competencies meet both project and donor requirements.</p> <p>1b Partners and donors mutually develop and sign an agreement outlining each other’s contributions, expectations, responsibilities and accountabilities — both locally and, where relevant, internationally.</p> <p>1c Partners and donors review this agreement together annually and keep it securely on record.</p> <p>1d Partners and donors establish reliable mechanisms for communication to ensure collaborative working throughout the project cycle.</p>
2 Core	Base the project design on research, organisational learning, community interest and need, using a rights-based approach.	<p>2a Organisations design projects that identify the needs and rights of community members and ensure inclusivity and sustainability of results.</p> <p>2b Organisations conduct a thorough community-led context analysis.</p> <p>2c The community helps to identify a clear strategic goal for the project.</p> <p>2d The community validates the project before it launches, making sure it honours the rights of all citizens involved.</p> <p>2e Organisations do not undertake any activities taking place in, or run in cooperation with, orphanages or other residential care institutions for children.</p> <p>2f The community is involved in every step of the design of the project, defining the scope as well as what success looks like.</p>
3	Design volunteer roles which meet the needs of the project identified and do not take away work from local communities.	<p>3a Organisations design volunteer roles that ensure benefit to both volunteers and community members.</p> <p>3b Organisations adhere to the principle of ‘do no harm’ during the creation of volunteer roles. This acknowledges that projects can sometimes have unintended negative consequences for the community, which need to be identified and mitigated.</p> <p>3c Organisations undertake labour market research to understand what professional skills are available in-country.</p> <p>3d Organisations ensure that volunteer roles can adapt to meet community aspirations.</p> <p>3e All partners and donors agree on the resources required, ensuring that volunteer skills and experience are accurately matched to the project’s aims and activities and that all roles are fully costed.</p>
4 Core	Ensure that the project will deliver development impact, long-term sustainability and environmental protection.	<p>4a The community and partners ensure the focus of the project is on enhancing capacity within the community.</p> <p>4b The community and organisations ensure the project progresses a broader existing sustainable development goal for the community and, where possible, contributes to a wider, longer-term development programme.</p> <p>4c Organisations demonstrate evidence of project value for money in providing the intended benefits for the community.</p> <p>4d The community and organisations ensure there is a clear sustainability plan in instances where volunteers deliver any basic or essential services, including formal teaching roles.</p> <p>4e Organisations carry out an environmental impact analysis to ensure the project design manages any environmental risk identified.</p>

Area 2: Delivery

Description: The delivery and management of an impactful and responsible Volunteering for Development project fulfils the original project design and involves the community in monitoring.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1 Core	Provide project management which ensures a safe and successful working environment for everyone involved.	<p>1a All people involved in the project, including implementing partner organisations and their staff, as well as volunteers, are aware of the project's desired outcomes and are organised to work together effectively as one team to achieve them.</p> <p>1b All partner staff and volunteers can answer questions about the project and feel empowered to make decisions.</p> <p>1c All partner staff create a volunteer-enabling environment to maximise the skills, energy and ideas of their volunteers.</p>
2	Ensure there is continued involvement and input from members of the community.	<p>2a Community members are aware of the procedures for reporting concerns or complaints in their own language, and are actively empowered to do so, should they have reason to feel unhappy with a volunteer's behaviour.</p> <p>2b There is recorded evidence that the community has regular opportunities to feed back on the project and on the impact of the volunteers.</p> <p>2c Community members are involved in implementation and delivery throughout the project.</p> <p>2d Organisations ensure inclusion of different groups of marginalised and vulnerable people (male/female/other, married/unmarried, educated/not educated, old/young etc.) in the project.</p>
3	Have procedures in place to handle disruptions to the project and manage emerging risks (volunteer behaviour, natural disaster, etc.).	<p>3a Organisations maintain a record of disruptions to the project and action taken by management in response.</p> <p>3b Organisations regularly review their preparedness to respond to incidents, external risks and hazards.</p>
4	Follow a robust system for monitoring and learning throughout the project.	<p>4a Organisations regularly monitor and evaluate the project.</p> <p>4b Organisations adapt project delivery and implementation using evaluation results and learning to improve their practice by putting any required improvements in place.</p>

Area 3: Review and Exit

Description: Impactful Volunteering for Development requires planned closure and robust reviews of projects, providing evidence of impact as well as learning for future projects.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1	Develop a clear exit strategy which terminates projects and partnerships in a transparent and participative way.	<p>1a Organisations develop and document a clear exit strategy for the project.</p> <p>1b Organisations have a process in place to document the learning from the project.</p> <p>1c Organisations plan for post-project evaluations.</p>
2 Core	Evaluate the project's total impact in order to verify with the community and learn from the results.	<p>2a Community members, organisations, volunteers and other stakeholders participate in project reviews and all monitoring, evaluation and learning exercises.</p> <p>2b The community is presented with the evidence and learning from the project.</p> <p>2c Organisations share evaluation findings — both successes and challenges — with all internal and external stakeholders.</p>
3	Investigate and understand the project's contribution to the community and to the volunteer's personal development.	<p>3a Organisations have monitoring systems and mechanisms in place to track the contributions of volunteers, through a combination of self-reporting and external assessment.</p> <p>3b The monitoring system includes a clear and active internal communications plan to ensure the feedback from volunteer and employee debriefings will inform and review organisational practices.</p> <p>3c Organisations use evaluation and impact measurement to shape the design of future volunteer projects and placements.</p>



2. Duty of Care

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

Scope: This must be met by any organisation and partner working in a community with volunteers for any duration to ensure community members and volunteers are kept safe and free from harm.



Area 1: Safety and Security

Description: Organisations have a responsibility to understand, assess and mitigate risks which may affect the safety of volunteers and communities.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1 Core	Clarify the organisation's tolerance to any risk which could affect volunteers.	<p>1a Organisations have a Security Policy which is made available to volunteers before their placement starts.</p> <p>1b Organisations make public a written statement that defines their tolerance to risks which could affect community members and volunteers.</p>
2	Recognise risks and mitigation of those risks during the project planning and budgeting process.	<p>2a Organisations budget for security and safety prevention and for response measures, including insurance and an identified local staff member as Security Focal Point.</p> <p>2b Trained security staff review design plans, or staff designing projects have training in safety and security.</p>
3 Core	Share relevant risk assessments with volunteers and staff, and receive their consent to participate before their placement starts.	<p>3a Organisations carry out risk assessments and relocation plans are completed for every location worked in and transport route used; and these are updated at a defined frequency.</p> <p>3b Organisations collect relevant information about the volunteer and hold evidence that the volunteer has taken an informed choice to participate.</p> <p>3c Volunteers receive pre-placement training on managing the risks that they will face.</p> <p>3d Communities are actively made aware of the nature of the project, volunteers' work and related potential risks.</p>
4	Monitor security and safety where volunteers are placed.	<p>4a Volunteers are trained on arrival on location-specific risks and, on longer-term placements, receive refresher security training during the placement.</p> <p>4b Organisations identify a trained member of staff to be responsible for monitoring security risks that may affect the project, community or volunteers and for issuing travel advice and communicating key issues to volunteers and local communities.</p> <p>4c Organisations establish a check-in process with each volunteer.</p>
5 Core	Establish and follow a set of security plans.	<p>5a Organisation and partner staff have access to and understand Security Plans to ensure all key risks are mitigated, and there are instructions available on how to deal with all likely incidents.</p> <p>5b Organisation and partner staff have access to and understand emergency communication plans.</p> <p>5c Organisations have a standard format and process for incident reporting.</p> <p>5d Organisations undertake and act on findings from debriefings, evaluation and reviews following all serious incidents.</p>

Area 2: Safeguarding and Protection

Description: Recognising that everyone has the right to feel and be safe, organisations should safeguard and protect everybody involved in Volunteering for Development, and all those they come into contact with, from violence, abuse, exploitation, harassment and neglect – with particular attention to vulnerable children and adults.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1 Core	Ensure that policies, procedures, training and accountabilities are in place to mitigate safeguarding and protection risks.	<p>1a Organisations have, and apply, a publicly available safeguarding and child protection policy that makes clear their commitment to safeguarding and child protection and describes the agency's understanding and definitions of abuse.</p> <p>1b Staff and volunteers are aware of whistleblowing policies, reporting mechanisms and disciplinary procedures to prevent, address and redress inappropriate behaviour of staff, volunteers, contracted or other personnel towards each other, the community, children and vulnerable adults.</p> <p>1c Staff and volunteers receive relevant training on child and vulnerable adult protection and on safeguarding policies and procedures</p> <p>1d Organisations carry out safeguarding risk assessments for each volunteer role at least annually, and whenever the role of the volunteer changes.</p> <p>1e A named safeguarding lead or committee monitors compliance.</p>
2 Core	Commit to promote child-safe volunteering in all environments.	<p>2a Organisations' commitment to child protection includes measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse.</p> <p>2b Organisations ensure that all children and young people are treated as equals and as individuals and that they are acknowledged and included as agents of change.</p> <p>2c Organisations do not allow volunteers to work with or within orphanages or other residential care facilities for children;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisations do not work with companies that have orphanages and other residential care centres incorporated (or with the possibility to incorporate) in tourism programmes or packages; - Organisations do not allow or facilitate one-off and short-term visits to orphanages or residential care facilities for children.
3	Ensure the protection of all volunteers and of all community members with whom they come into contact.	<p>3a Organisations use appropriately skilled, qualified and experienced personnel to provide pre-placement and ongoing training to volunteers about their responsibilities to people in communities in terms of safeguarding and child protection.</p> <p>3b Organisations provide guidelines on appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and on recognising, reporting and responding to allegations of maltreatment, exploitation, abuse and neglect.</p> <p>3c Partners have written procedures, accessible to all and locally appropriate, which provide step-by-step guidance on reporting safeguarding concerns and incidents.</p>
4	Promote and ensure respect within and between the staff, volunteers, community members and all organisations involved in the project.	<p>4a Organisations communicate and implement a Code of Conduct that ensures the relationships between the community and partners are characterised by respect for the rights of all.</p> <p>4b Organisations have developed and implemented policies or guidelines relating to messaging and imagery, including of children, which ensures that the local community and individuals are portrayed accurately and not put at risk, sensationalised or stereotyped.</p> <p>4c Organisations ensure the active and meaningful engagement of children, young people and adults in decisions that affect them.</p>
5	Provide the protection and support needs required by the diversity and individuality of volunteers and those with whom they come into contact.	<p>5a Organisations ensure equality, equity, inclusivity and diversity at all stages of project design and delivery.</p> <p>5b Organisations have procedures in place to recognise, prevent and respond to any form of exploitation, abuse, harassment and bullying against any individual.</p>

Area 3: Health and Wellbeing

Description: To ensure the best outcomes for the individual, the organisation, and community members, organisations should maintain the physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of volunteers and communities – before, during and after placements.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1 Core	Assess and promote the health and wellbeing of volunteers in advance of placements.	<p>1a Organisations have in place mitigation systems, such as insurance, to reduce the potential impact of the placement on volunteers' health or wellbeing before, during or after the placement</p> <p>1b Organisations deliver a pre-placement training module on health and wellbeing, including psychological resilience, and briefings on health risks and precautions.</p>
2	Promote positive physical and mental health for volunteers (and for community members if there is a health focus for the project).	<p>2a All organisation and partner staff working with volunteers have a duty to monitor and evaluate volunteers' health and wellbeing throughout the placement.</p> <p>2b Organisations appoint a designated staff member to recognise and provide first response to health problems (including mental health) and then signposts to appropriate service providers.</p> <p>2c Organisations ensure relevant staff are trained in the importance of reducing stigma associated with mental health.</p>
3	Consider the impact of placements on the health and wellbeing of children, vulnerable adults and the wider community.	<p>3a Organisations have policies and processes in place to ensure that the health and wellbeing of already vulnerable children is not worsened, such as the way that orphanage volunteering contributes to attachment disorders in children.</p> <p>3b Organisations include risks to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children, vulnerable adults and other members of the community in all risk assessments.</p> <p>3c Organisations include the placement's impact on the health and wellbeing of the local community in all Terms of Reference for monitoring and evaluation work.</p> <p>3d Volunteers understand the organisation's stance on bullying and discrimination, and receive pre-departure training on equality and anti-bullying.</p>



3. Managing Volunteers

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

Scope: This will apply to volunteers as well as to the organisations that engage and work with them. It will apply to local, national and international volunteers. This provides a supported and structured framework for all stages of the volunteer journey.

Area 1: Recruitment and Selection

Description: Volunteers are recruited and selected, using consistent criteria, to fulfil the needs defined by the community.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1 Core	Be clear on the objectives, values and processes related to the recruiting organisation's involvement with volunteers.	<p>1a Organisations' volunteering policies define volunteering for the recruiting organisation, setting out relevant objectives, procedures and responsibilities.</p> <p>1b Organisation and partner staff understand the objectives, values and processes related to volunteer recruitment and placement.</p> <p>1c Organisations' policies, practices and marketing remove, as far as is practicable, any barriers that may discriminate against volunteers applying or succeeding in their application.</p>
2	Ensure marketing campaigns are realistic about the volunteering experience and are targeted to a diverse range of volunteers.	<p>2a Potential volunteers are presented with a realistic depiction of the volunteer experience and the partnerships between countries and organisations.</p> <p>2b Organisations actively encourage applications from people from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>2c Organisations' marketing helps volunteers understand that the primary aim of their placement is meeting the needs of the community and any partners.</p>
3	Create role descriptions which are based on the needs assessment and which clarify the support available.	<p>3a Community members and organisations have identified the volunteer skills and experience required by the project.</p> <p>3b Volunteers can see, from the role description, who is supporting them and what terms and agreements apply to the placement.</p> <p>3c Volunteers are clear about their tasks and the expected outcomes of their placement.</p> <p>3d Everyone involved in the project is clear about each person's role and how they relate to each other.</p>
4 Core	Assess potential volunteers according to standardised selection criteria.	<p>4a Potential volunteers receive clear information on the selection process and the requirements for the role.</p> <p>4b Organisations' staff assess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A match between community needs, partner needs and volunteer commitment; - Soft skills and technical skills; - Intercultural understanding; - Past volunteering experience; - Awareness and understanding of the realities and context of a placement. <p>4c Organisations' assessment and selection process allows for partners to lead or have equal involvement.</p> <p>4d Organisations obtain personal and/or professional references, and undertake criminal and child protection background checks.</p> <p>4e Organisations have a process in place to assess the health of volunteers.</p>

Area 2: Preparation, Training and Learning

Description: To maximise the impact of the placement, pre-placement support and training provided to volunteers and partners ensures that volunteers are well-prepared.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1	Familiarise volunteers and partners with all relevant policies and procedures relating to the volunteer placement.	<p>1a Volunteers receive a written or online copy of policies and procedures, available for them throughout their deployment.</p> <p>1b Volunteers sign and agree to follow these policies throughout the duration of their involvement with the organisations.</p> <p>1c Partners are familiarised and provided with all relevant policies and procedures to appropriately support volunteers' placements.</p> <p>1d Partners will ensure all policies regarding volunteer support and management are in alignment prior to the placement taking place.</p>
2 Core	Agree realistic expectations between partners, before the volunteer placement, to ensure partners are clear about each other's roles and responsibilities.	<p>2a Partners clearly understand the capabilities and likely impact of the volunteer's involvement.</p> <p>2b Partners understand the volunteer code of conduct and provide support in monitoring it.</p> <p>2c Partners have clear expectations of the volunteers' behaviours, attitudes and mind sets in order to get the best from them.</p> <p>2d Partners are made aware of any social or cultural sensitivities that they should bear in mind for the placement.</p>
3	Ensure all training and learning materials, both pre-placement and in-placement, are up-to-date, free, accessible, relevant and engaging for a diverse range of volunteers with different learning styles.	<p>3a Volunteers participate in required trainings and feel able to apply the skills and knowledge received.</p> <p>3b Organisations' staff will regularly review and update each partner's training and learning processes and content, as well as volunteer-relevant policies, to ensure high quality and relevance.</p>
4	Brief volunteers on the context of their placement.	<p>4a Volunteers clearly understand the inherent challenges of development work and volunteering.</p> <p>4b Volunteers are provided with information about the developmental objectives of the project on which they are volunteering, including how the project was designed and how their involvement will benefit it.</p> <p>4c Volunteers are inducted into the wider organisation, including its objectives and values and how the project fits into the wider mission and vision of the organisation and its partners.</p>
5 Core	Set realistic expectations with volunteers, before they start their placement, to ensure they are clear about their role, the behaviours expected of them, and local conditions.	<p>5a Volunteers clearly understand the likely impact of their involvement, the intended long-term outcomes and the adaptive nature of Volunteering for Development projects.</p> <p>5b Volunteers are encouraged to speak to past volunteers of the same or similar project, and where possible with members of the local staff team.</p> <p>5c Volunteers sign and adhere to a code of conduct whilst on placement.</p> <p>5d Volunteers are made aware of, and given time to discuss, the best behaviours, attitudes and mindsets for effective volunteering.</p> <p>5e Volunteers are made aware of any social or cultural sensitivities relevant to their placement.</p> <p>5f Volunteers receive detailed induction and training on the culture specific to where they will be volunteering.</p> <p>5g Volunteers have clear joining instructions and contacts to help them navigate supported or unsupported safely to initial accommodation on arrival.</p> <p>5h Volunteers are made aware of social and financial implications of being on a placement.</p>

Area 3: Placement and Support

Description: To ensure an impactful placement, volunteers receive effective in-placement professional and personal support.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1 Core	Clarify roles and responsibilities between organisations, partners and all volunteers.	<p>1a Partners sign an agreement from organisations to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities, covering any relevant stages from needs assessment through to the end of the placement.</p> <p>1b Volunteers, partners and organisations review and sign an agreement clarifying roles and responsibilities and setting out the terms and conditions of the placement.</p> <p>1c Volunteers understand the terms of their agreement and see them being applied consistently, transparently and equitably.</p> <p>1d Organisations provide ongoing support to partners and staff on safety and security, safeguarding, health, volunteer engagement, and volunteer management.</p> <p>1e Volunteers receive orientation, at the start of the placement, about the workplace, the local context, partners and the community.</p>
2 Core	Review, on a regular basis, the progress of the placement, the volunteer's performance and the terms and conditions.	<p>2a Volunteers and partners review and sign off the placement description, objectives and work plan on the volunteers' arrival as part of the overall project plan.</p> <p>2b Organisations share with volunteers the results of their monitoring, including their performance and any identified outcomes of the placement.</p> <p>2c Volunteers' terms of agreement are benchmarked and reviewed at least each year.</p>
3	Ensure a complaints and grievance policy and procedure is shared and understood by the volunteer.	<p>3a Volunteers are aware of the complaints and grievance policy and procedure.</p> <p>3b Organisations manage complaints from volunteers consistently, transparently and equitably.</p>
4	Ensure processes are in place to protect the health and safety of volunteers and those affected by their presence in the community.	<p>4a Organisations provide emergency phone number and emergency contacts to volunteers and partners. Emergency calls are responded to consistently, using security plans and incident reporting procedures.</p> <p>4b Volunteers report safety and security incidents to organisations using standard incident reports.</p> <p>4c Organisations annually review protocols for safeguarding, incident management and health and safety.</p> <p>4d Volunteers adhere to the code of conduct and follow safety and security guidelines.</p>
5 Core	Provide professional and personal support to all volunteers.	<p>5a Organisations provide professional and personal support in response to volunteers' needs</p> <p>5b International volunteers and national volunteers are given equitable attention.</p> <p>5c LGBTI+, transgender or gender non-conforming volunteers are able to speak to a trusted member of staff about specific concerns they may have, leading to a support plan.</p> <p>5d Organisations exemplify good mental health practices in the workplace by following Duty of Care policy and procedures.</p> <p>5e Staff provide regular feedback acknowledging the contributions of volunteers and supporting ongoing learning and improvement.</p>
6	Support volunteers when they end their placement.	<p>6a Organisations' exit procedures and supporting documentation set out the responsibilities of the volunteer and each partner, and the resources available.</p> <p>6b Volunteers are given adequate information and notice to complete their responsibilities at the end of the project.</p> <p>6c Organisations conduct an in-placement exit interview that provides learning and development for the volunteer and organisations.</p>

Area 4: Debriefing, Recognition and Ongoing Engagement

Description: Organisations and volunteers learn from the placement experience; volunteers are recognised for their contributions and are supported to continue their engagement with development efforts.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1 Core	Support volunteers to reflect on and analyse the impact of their placement.	<p>1a Organisations provide time and tools for volunteers, community members and relevant staff to reflect upon the placement and analyse its impact.</p> <p>1b Volunteers and organisations have a record of how specific placements impact on personal development and on development projects.</p> <p>1c Volunteers receive guidance on how best to present and discuss their volunteer experience in professional and social settings.</p>
2 Core	Provide comprehensive and effective operational and personal debriefing for volunteers.	<p>2a Organisations train debriefers to follow agreed formats for both operational and personal debriefings.</p> <p>2b Volunteers are informed about debriefing arrangements, and volunteers who request a debrief receive one.</p> <p>2c Volunteers are informed of how concerns raised by the volunteer during debriefing will be handled by the organisation.</p> <p>2d Volunteers are made aware of channels for investigating and responding to grievances.</p>
3	Provide formal and informal recognition and appreciation of the volunteers' contributions.	<p>3a Organisations have transparent recognition procedures and agreed recognition tools for use at the end of the placement.</p> <p>3b Organisations keep sufficient records of volunteer personal development and performance achievement to validate any formal recognition of achievement, in employer references for example.</p> <p>3c Organisations express appreciation to volunteers who complete their placement satisfactorily.</p>
4	Provide volunteers returning from long-term placements remote from their home community with formal and informal resettlement support.	<p>4a Organisations facilitate volunteer peer support from current and former volunteers.</p> <p>4b Organisations provide the volunteer with guidance to assist their social reintegration and entry into education, training, employment or retirement.</p>
5	Support and encourage volunteers' continuing learning and their ongoing engagement with the wider context of development.	<p>5a Organisations provide opportunity for volunteers to connect to local, regional or national societies and organisations focused on development.</p> <p>5b Organisations provide opportunity for volunteers to connect local organisations focused on volunteering, including any alumni networks.</p> <p>5c Organisations facilitate e-volunteering or re-volunteering.</p> <p>5d Organisations facilitate connections with outgoing volunteers to share insights and advice.</p> <p>5e Organisations facilitate knowledge sharing between volunteers and with external audiences.</p>

4. Measuring Impact

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

Scope: This will apply to organisations, partners, volunteers and communities working together to measure the impact of Volunteering for Development activities. This also provides a framework for continuous learning and improvement, which in turn will inform future project design and planning.

Area 1: Process

Description: Measuring the impact of a Volunteering for Development project requires the use of an established planning framework and mechanisms which are inclusive, participatory and responsive to local communities, other stakeholders and the Sustainable Development Goals.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1 Core	Base the project on a planning framework, including specific indicators of success identified with the community.	<p>1a Organisations check that the project's goals are linked to actions, and that assumptions are defined and tested.</p> <p>1b Organisations derive quantitative indicators that reflect community needs and aspirations.</p> <p>1c Organisations use SDG indicators wherever possible.</p> <p>1d Organisations collect baseline information for project inputs, outputs and outcomes, agreed with the community, and make this publicly available</p> <p>1e Organisations ensure projects are designed based on community or stakeholder-based needs assessment and risk assessment.</p>
2 Core	Collect data on the impact of the project for the community.	<p>2a Organisations focus data collection on agreed-upon high-level indicators.</p> <p>2b The community participates in data collection and information collection processes.</p> <p>2c Organisations ensure training is provided to those collecting data: staff, volunteers, consultants, or community members.</p>
3	Use community input to measure impact.	<p>3a The community's views and opinions are collected using qualitative and participatory research processes.</p> <p>3b Community members receive feedback from impact research and validate the data, information and conclusions obtained.</p>
4	Ensure that the value added of volunteers is clear.	<p>4a Organisations identify, during the design and measurement processes, the specific value added by volunteers in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>4b Organisations ensure volunteers' specific contribution is disaggregated in the planning framework for projects that include multiple interventions.</p>
5	Adapt measurement processes and tools for local context and ease of use.	<p>5a Organisations' measurement processes and tools are simple and can be understood by relevant stakeholders, including community members and volunteers.</p> <p>5b Measurement tools are translated into local languages.</p> <p>5c Organisations use appropriate tools for vulnerable communities (i.e. visual tools for illiterate communities, tools adapted to differing levels of ability, etc.).</p> <p>5d Organisations' impact measurement processes will follow a 'do no harm' approach.</p> <p>5e Organisations will ensure privacy, confidentiality and security of data.</p>

Area 2: Outputs and Outcomes

Description: An impactful Volunteering for Development project identifies the changes to community, volunteer and organisations caused by the project and by the role of volunteering in the project.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1	Measure over time the capacity of both partners to contribute to community and development impact.	<p>1a Partners' capacity to deliver impactful projects is assessed at the start of any project or relationship.</p> <p>1b Organisations regularly measure the development of capacity and capability in relation to impact measurement.</p> <p>1c Volunteers understand how to measure capacity and the goals that have been set.</p> <p>1d Organisations monitor improvements in impact measurement as a specific project goal.</p>
2	Disaggregate impact on vulnerable and marginalised members of the community groups.	<p>2a Volunteers and organisations report impact by gender, age and other specific criteria required to demonstrate inclusivity as identified in the project design.</p> <p>2b Volunteers and organisations pay attention to the overlapping identities (for example, gender and ethnicity) that can drive exclusion.</p>
3	Measure impact of the project on volunteers.	<p>3a Organisations track the impact of the volunteering activities on individual volunteers themselves.</p>
4	Adapt impact measurement indicators and processes to reflect the community's perceptions of change.	<p>4a The community's perceptions of change influence impact measurement.</p> <p>4b The community's perceived changes identify negative impact, and other unforeseen challenges, and influence the adaptation of the project's impact measurement indicators.</p>

Area 3: Reporting

Description: Impactful volunteering requires the reporting of impact results, linked to Sustainable Development Goals, to all appropriate stakeholders.

	Key Actions	Indicators
1 Core	Report and feed back on a regular basis.	<p>1a Partners receive reports on how aligned projects or programmes of work are performing in their or different communities, regions or countries.</p> <p>1b Organisations report on a regular basis to the communities and other relevant stakeholders in appropriate language and format.</p>
2	Ensure that volunteer contributions are linked to Sustainable Development Goals in all reporting.	<p>2a Organisations' reporting links impact to Sustainable Development Goals and highlights the role of volunteering.</p> <p>2b Organisations report to national governments to ensure that volunteer and project contribution towards Sustainable Development Goals is captured.</p> <p>2c Organisations use a 'do no harm' approach in reporting to government and other stakeholders and ensure that the rights of communities, stakeholders and beneficiaries are respected.</p>
3	Collaborate within the sector, sharing data and other evidence for the impact of Volunteering for Development projects.	<p>3a Organisations share results, reports and other documentation with the wider sector to improve practice and measure impact towards the Sustainable Development Goals.</p>

Appendix 1: A Call to Action

To my fellow volunteer-involving organisations and all Volunteering for Development stakeholders,

The UN, national governments and all volunteer-involving organisations are gradually embracing the need for clear structures that optimise volunteerism's contribution to National Development Agendas and the overarching development Agenda 2030.

Evidently, the need to have a set of guiding principles in volunteerism is one that is undisputed. What has been lacking is a common understanding on the guiding principles that can be adopted and progressively customised for the diverse circumstances within the countries/communities where VIOs operate.

To address this a great step was taken, led by Forum, to develop a set of standards. My organisation, The Volunteer Involving Organizations Society – Kenya was privileged to be part of the Reference Group.

The VIO Society – Kenya believes that the key actions set out in the Global Standard are good tools for learning and improvement of organisations engaging volunteers and are well-placed in their endeavours to make positive impacts within communities where they work.

In my very honest opinion, it would be an uphill task to develop any better guidelines to meet the expectation of all of us in Volunteering for Development and to meet the dire need within our communities.

Having been keenly following the volunteerism sector for some good time, with a full commitment to it, and having observed the challenges and opportunities there are – especially for us in the Global South – I would humbly propose to all of the VIOs across the globe to embrace and implement this Standard, contributing also to Forum's intent to make it better with time.

Thank you.

Fred Sadia

Secretary and National Coordinator
Volunteer Involving Organizations Society – Kenya

Appendix 2: Glossary

Community: This word refers to the people with or for whom the volunteer is working while on his/her placement, whether this is the community itself — for example, a village — or those whose work will benefit this community — for example, a Ministry, a network or an advocacy organisation.

Organisation: Organisations lead the facilitation of Volunteering for Development and volunteer efforts. Organisations have committed to adhere to the Global Standard.

Partner: Partners refer to organisations that are directly involved with and have responsibility for implementing volunteer efforts to Volunteering for Development activities. These include volunteer involving organisations, sometimes referred to as sending, receiving or hosting organisations.

Donor: Donors are organisations or institutions that provide funding or resources for Volunteering for Development activities. Donors may also include government institutions, corporates or trusts and foundations.

Project and Programme: The Global Standard uses the word ‘Project’ generically for any activity that involves volunteers, and that is being carried out by an organisation for a community, whether directly in a community or on behalf of the community. For some organisations, ‘Programmes’ are top-level pieces of work, delivered through a number of Projects within the community. The Global Standard’s use of ‘Project’ as a generic term should not prevent organisations from applying the Global Standard at both these levels.

Volunteer: This is any person donating their time to help others who has some form of agreement with an organisation. It refers to volunteers of any age or level of experience, long-term or short-term, working internationally or nationally, with allowances or not. It does not refer to community-based volunteers working without a formal structure or citizen activists.

Orphanages: This refers to all places, including residential care homes and children’s institutions, where children stay overnight instead of living with a family, whether it is for a short or long period of time.

Appendix 3: Contributing Organisations

The Forum Board wishes to acknowledge the following organisations whose staff generously gave their time and expertise during the development of the Global Standard for Volunteering for Development.

Forum Leading Standards Working Group

The Forum Leading Standards Working Group consists of Forum member organisations responsible for leading the development of the Global Standard.

Organisation	Role	Country
Comhlámh	Co-Chair	Ireland
Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA)	Co-Chair	New Zealand
Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)	Co-Chair / Coordinator	United Kingdom
Australian Red Cross (ARC)	Member	Australia
Australian Volunteers International (AVI)	Member	Australia
Centre d'étude et de Cooperation Internationale (CECI)	Member	Canada
Cuso International	Member	Canada
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH	Member	Germany
Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario (FOCSIV)	Member	Italy
France Volontaires	Member	France
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	Member	Japan
Nepal Friendship Society	Member	Nepal
Raleigh International	Member	United Kingdom
Unité	Member	Switzerland
United Nations Volunteers (UNV)	Member	Germany
World University Service of Canada (WUSC)	Member	Canada

Leading Standards Reference Group

The Leading Standards Reference Group consists of non-Forum organisations responsible for supporting the global consultation and providing expertise to shape the Global Standard.

Organisation	Role	Country
Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)	Coordinator	United Kingdom
ALTO Global Consulting	Member	Australia
Better Care Network	Member	United Kingdom
Cambodia Volunteer Network (VolCam)	Member	Cambodia
ECPAT International	Member	Thailand
Engineers Without Borders Canada	Member	Canada
European Volunteer Centre (CEV)	Member	Belgium
Gambia Volunteers	Member	Gambia
Habitat for Humanity	Member	Philippines
Hope and Homes for Children	Member	United Kingdom
Humanitarian Academy	Member	United Kingdom
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Member	Switzerland
Johns Hopkins University	Member	USA
Lumos	Member	United Kingdom
Pencils of Promise	Member	USA
Philippine Coalition on Volunteerism (PhilCV)	Member	Philippines
Projects Abroad	Member	United Kingdom
Restless Development	Member	United Kingdom
Rubaroo	Member	India
Transform Alliance Africa	Member	Kenya
UNICEF	Member	USA
Vine Trust	Member	United Kingdom
Volunteer Involving Organizations Society (VIO Society)	Member	Kenya
World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists	Member	United Kingdom

Content Sub-Groups

Each sub-group consists of Forum and non-Forum organisations responsible or developing the content of the Global Standard. Sub-groups were managed by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).

Sub-Group: Designing and Delivering Projects

Organisation	Role	Country
Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)	Co-Chair	South Africa
Restless Development	Co-Chair	United Kingdom
ALTO Global Consulting	Member	Australia
Cuso International	Member	Canada
Engineers Without Borders Canada	Member	Canada
Projects Abroad	Member	United Kingdom
Vine Trust	Member	United Kingdom

Sub-Group: Duty of Care

Organisation	Role	Country
Engineers Without Borders	Co-Chair	Canada
Raleigh International	Co-Chair	United Kingdom
ALTO Global Consulting	Member	Australia
Comhlámh	Member	Ireland
Cuso International	Member	Canada
ECPAT International	Member	Thailand
Hope and Homes for Children	Member	United Kingdom
Lumos	Member	United Kingdom
Projects Abroad	Member	United Kingdom
Transform Alliance Africa	Member	Kenya

Sub-Group: Managing Volunteers

Organisation	Role	Country
Cuso International	Co-Chair	Canada
Cambodia Volunteer Network (VolCam)	Member	Cambodia
European Volunteer Centre (CEV)	Member	Belgium
Gambia Volunteers	Member	Gambia
Raleigh International	Member	United Kingdom
Restless Development	Member	United Kingdom

Sub-Group: Measuring Impact

Organisation	Role	Country
World University Service of Canada (WUSC)	Co-Chair	Canada
Engineers Without Borders	Member	Canada
Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies	Member	USA
Projects Abroad	Member	United Kingdom
Unité	Member	Switzerland
Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)	Member	United Kingdom
World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists	Member	United Kingdom

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Appendix: Bibliography

The Global Standard primarily derives from the experience of the volunteers and staff – of Forum member organisations as well as non-Members - who were consulted. They sometimes made reference to documents and sources from which they drew information. Here is the list of those referenced.

External sources:

ACFID: Practice Note on ‘Responsible Volunteering for Development’, February 2018

Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct, 2019

Comhlámh Code of Good Practice, 2019

CHS Alliance: the Core Humanitarian Standard and its related self-assessment and verification tools

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Keeping Children Safe: International Child Safeguarding Standards

OECD/DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, 2010

Unité: Qualitative and Participatory Impact Assessment of Personnel Development Cooperation, 2018

Volunteer Canada Standards

Volunteering Australia National Standards

VSO, ‘International Citizen Service Quality Assurance Handbook’, 2018

Information was additionally drawn from policies/information provided by: Hope and Homes for Children, WUSC, CUSO, AVI, VSO, UNICEF, People In Aid and Better Care Network.

Internal Forum documentation:

Forum Leading Standards Working Group paper 'Agreed Framework for Leading Standards for Volunteering for Development', February 2018

2016-2020 Forum Strategic Plan

James O'Brien and Rahim Hassanali, VSO, Global Volunteering for Development Standard Desk Review, July 2018

Analysis of Survey of Forum Members, April 2019

Notes and Summary Analysis of Forum Workshops, 2018/19

Minutes from Forum Board and the Forum Leading Standards Working Group meetings



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