



RESEARCH SUMMARY

Impact beyond volunteering

A realist evaluation of the
complex and long-term
pathways of volunteer impact

Janet Clark and Simon Lewis
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Introduction

Volunteering can bring about significant change – not only to the host communities, but also to the volunteers themselves, and potentially to the wider development sector. Much has been documented on the impacts of volunteering on host communities, but what about the resultant changes in the understanding and behaviour of returning volunteers and the longer-term impacts on their career paths and on the communities where they live and interact after their placement?

VSO's *Impact Beyond Volunteering* study sought to measure these impacts by looking at the pathways of change that volunteers experience during the act of volunteering and the combination of factors and drivers that lead to change on their return. It explores how this change translates into post-placement outcomes, and how these may contribute to broader development impacts. It also compares these changes and impacts between different types of volunteer and different volunteer schemes.

The study asked returning VSO volunteers – from a large geographic area and long timeframe – to identify what changes in attitudes, understanding and beliefs happened to them while in placement and why – and whether any subsequent changes in behaviour and practice occurred on their return. By exploring how and why change happens, it seeks to establish linkages between pre-placement changes and post-placement actions. Although assessing any meaningful broader impact is limited, the study did identify impacts at different levels post-placement that can be attributed – in whole or in part – to the experience of volunteering.

This summary presents the key findings of the study, which asked three interrelated questions:

1. What is the impact of volunteering for development on the understanding, attitudes and behaviours towards inequality and social justice of individual VSO volunteers?
2. After their placement do VSO volunteers do anything differently as a result of changed understanding, attitudes and behaviours towards inequality and social justice?
3. What impact do any changes in practice have and on whom?

Differences and commonalities between volunteers were explored across different demographics – looking at factors such as age, gender, length of placement, time since placement, area of placement, corporate and non-corporate. It also identified enabling factors and barriers to change occurring during and after placement.

Key findings

The study revealed that people who have volunteered do things differently as a result of their experience, and that this varies according to the type of volunteer. Some of the findings that emerged are that:

- Volunteering increases levels of social action.
- Volunteering results in a range of changes for the volunteer during their placement.
- The changes that happen during placement impact on the level and type of social action that they undertake post placement.
- The age at which people volunteer for the first time affects the changes that happen for them during placement.
- The length of placement affects the changes that happen during placement.
- The location of placement affects the changes that happen during placement.
- The changes that happen during placement vary for different volunteer types.
- The type of placement (role, thematic area, type of partner placed with) affect the changes that happen during placement.
- Changes that happen during placement vary, dependent on where the volunteer lives in relation to the communities with which they work.
- The challenges that volunteers experience during their placement affect the changes that happen during placement.
- Motivation to volunteer affects the changes that happen during placement.
- Motivation to volunteer is different for different types of volunteer and is also variable for volunteers of different ages.



VSO volunteer Patricia Doyle with seven-month-old baby Eldana and her mother at a hospital in Hosanna, Ethiopia.

What happens to volunteers after their placement?

The study identified a wide range of outcomes occurring as a result of volunteering. These most frequently mentioned outcomes were: a **career change or direction**; **influence over others**; and a **change in practice**.

Career change and direction

Volunteers frequently change their career or career direction after their placement. Increased professional experience and heightened personal drive or motivation were the main reasons behind this change and they impacted upon career direction in a number of different ways:

- i. A substantial change from a different career to one with international development and/or humanitarian work.
- ii. A greater commitment to international development as a pre-existing career path.
- iii. A career change to the sector worked on during placement.
- iv. More responsibility and/or promotion upon returning to pre-placement role.
- v. Exposure to potential employer organisations during placement.
- vi. Greater clarity on career path.

Among the volunteers that took part in the study, many said the experience that their placements gave them laid the foundations and created opportunities for a career change into the international development sector, irrespective of how long ago they volunteered. Terms such as 'springboard', 'launch-pad', getting a 'head-start' and 'foundation' were used to describe the impact of their placements on a future career in international development. Those already working in international development experienced a greater commitment to remain in the sector, which may be linked to the motivations which led them to volunteer.

Others note an increased interest in the focus area of their placement, which has led to greater responsibility in their jobs as a result of new skills, knowledge, experience, and an increase in confidence. Some undertook a volunteer placements in sectors in which they had no or little previous experience, and these involved applying their skills, such as fundraising, campaigning, or monitoring and evaluation, to new sectors, for example gender, social inclusion, or health and HIV/AIDS. In a number of cases, this triggered a subsequent post-placement career change to these new sectors. In some other cases, exposure to more grassroots community development processes broadened volunteers' interest beyond very technically focused areas. As a result, a number move into more general fields linked to community development.

Numerous volunteers noted how, upon returning to the same or similar roles after placement, they were more effective in undertaking their duties. For corporate volunteers, in particular, this has often resulted in promotion within their company rather than a career change.

A small number of volunteers highlighted how, during their placements, they gained exposure to and knowledge of specific organisations that they then went on to work for. Often this was driven by increased awareness and respect for these organisations, which led volunteers to seek paid employment with them. In addition, through networking and gaining new contacts during their placements, a number of volunteers found employment opportunities, many of which followed directly on from their placements and involved them remaining in their placement country. In some cases, opportunities at host partner organisations have been taken up by volunteers completing their placements.

More generally, the volunteer experience appears to provide greater clarity on career direction, whether that be in international development or otherwise. For some, the volunteer experience has made them reflect on what job satisfaction means for them. Many realised that job satisfaction entailed finding employment that aimed to make a difference or have an impact for others.

Influencing others

All volunteers experience an increase in self-awareness and in cultural awareness during their placements, and are often inspired to influence others on their return. This may involve, for example, challenging negative behaviour and stereotypes and promoting positive causes. These influencing actions tend to occur at different levels: individual; group; organisation; government; and global.

At an **individual level**: volunteers experience many personal changes during their placement and influence family and friends or individual colleagues informally when they return. This can be by challenging perceptions and stimulating an interest in development, social action and volunteering, or in some instances encouraging donations or engagement with fundraising activities or campaigns. For some volunteers, their experience has influenced the way they raise their children, which further impacts on their children's life choices and attitudes.

At a **group level**: volunteers tend to be more likely to engage in awareness-raising activities and events after their placement. Many young volunteers give presentations at school assemblies or in colleges; others raise awareness through faith-based groups and institutions. Many also use social media or set up websites, write blogs, or input into radio programmes. This type of influencing is usually more structured than individual influencing, with the aim of raising awareness and encouraging action.

Generally, group influencing focuses on global issues such as poverty and the environment. Some of the influencing is more advocacy-based, which includes anti-discriminatory practice and rights awareness work, for example with senior citizens.

At an **organisational level**: some of the above types of influencing may take the form of a one-off session, others may start in this way and then evolve to become more embedded within organisations or networks. Much of the influencing that takes place at an organisational level is by volunteers working in the development sector. They describe how they brought about change within the organisations they work for, and whilst they may have carried out these actions without their volunteer experience, they feel that it has informed how they approach issues; others feel they may not have moved to work in the development sector without their volunteer experience. One of the corporate volunteers tried to influence his company to financially support a project, thereby raising awareness.

At a **national or governmental level**: a number of volunteers become engaged in writing to and lobbying MPs. Sometimes this is done at an individual level; sometimes through groups and networks. One volunteer noted how they had been instrumental in setting up a policy and advocacy programme for NGOs to influence both governments and donors. Some have been involved in advising government; for example one has advised on inclusive economic development and another has directly inputted into a white paper. One volunteer described how their placement has helped them come to the realisation that it is possible to influence governmental change by working within government, rather than just through external lobbying.

At a **global level**: some volunteers become involved in influencing through global networks which feed into global debates on inequality and social action. Some of the youth volunteers have set up platforms for global debate, and one volunteer has become directly involved in international broadcasting.

Whilst some of these influencing actions would have been undertaken by individuals irrespective of their volunteering experience, many feel that their placement experience has given them exposure and skills which equipped them with the confidence and motivation to be better at influencing others.

Changes in practice

Many volunteers experience changes in their practice and ways of working once they return, with the nature of these depending on where they are working or living. For many of those who work in development, their placement has informed their approach to programme design, as well as their relationships with funders and partners and their openness to collaboration and sharing. For those working in

organisations that work with and through volunteers, their insight from first-hand experience of volunteering has informed how they have gone on to support and work with volunteers. Some volunteers have used the learning from their placement to engage in work with communities. The importance of working in a participatory way and ensuring that the voices of the most marginalised are reflected and heard are other prominent changes which volunteers link to their placement experience. Some are actively using these approaches in their work and/or disseminating this learning to others. Those volunteers who are more involved with social action post placement are also more likely to feel that this change is due to their placement to a significant extent.

Irrespective of their current context, many volunteers feel that their placement has helped improve their ability to listen, observe, take time to work things out, and look beneath the surface, to understand behaviours and motivations, rather than make assumptions and jump to conclusions. Many say that it has helped them adjust their pace of work and approach things in a more considered way. This in turn has supported them in not only taking a calmer approach to work, but also to life beyond work. Some also feel that their placement has influenced their ability to think critically and has given them confidence to challenge individuals, colleagues and organisations.



Alimamy Kargbo, a carpenter, trains young boys after school hours in Makeni, Sierra Leone.

Do different volunteer types have different outcomes?

All volunteers identified the above outcomes as occurring as a result of their placement, with career **change or direction** predominating. There were, however, subtle variations in the kind of career change experienced by different types of volunteer.

For young volunteers on longer placements, the outcome was more likely to be a cementing of pre-existing plans for career direction rather than a change, and this may be linked to the expectation that they had to have some relevant experience prior to their placement.

Corporate volunteers mentioned subsequent career development mainly in terms of promotions and increased responsibilities within their companies. A number of corporate volunteers had been promoted soon after their volunteer placement and used approaches learnt from their placement in their new roles.

There were some differences in **influencing actions**, such as youth volunteers using more social media to network and campaign, and establish less formal networks and groups. One had established a WhatsApp group focusing on African politics and social justice, and the group now has over 2,000 members. Another set up a young environmentalist group which has been running for a number of years. Several national youth volunteers from the South have set up new groups and charities.

Outcomes in terms of **changes in practice** were similar across volunteer types, with volunteers saying that they have become more patient, more respecting of diversity and difference, better at building relationships and more understanding as a result of their placement. These changes in practice did however vary in how they linked to changes in understanding, attitude and behaviour across volunteer types.



ICS volunteers Romana Colman and Rebecca Hastie prepare an evening meal with their local host family in Lindi, Tanzania.

International North-South volunteers, some of those placed in African countries, mentioned new skills as key to changes in practice, whereas those placed in Asian countries spoke more of the importance of increased awareness, changes in attitude, and building relationships during their placements. International South-South volunteers also highlighted the gaining of new skills during placement, such as management skills and human relations, as having a direct link to post-placement changes in practice.

A significant number of international South-South and North-South volunteers tend to do further international volunteering. Many international North-South volunteers become active in promoting volunteering and in a range of post placement activities, including campaigning, supporting local charities, and undertaking grassroots community work. The younger ones in particular expressed clear linkages from their placement experience to a change in their consumer patterns, which they attributed to an increased awareness of poverty and the experience of living and working with limited resources.

Young volunteers also mentioned that increased awareness – of culture, development, community needs/challenges and self-awareness – significantly impacted on their changes in practice. Those who were younger when they undertook their placement were more likely to increase their community, social and political action post placement, and national youth volunteers were more likely to be in community, social or political action post placement.

Corporate volunteers noted increased awareness, patience, and better intercultural communications with colleagues and clients. A recurring theme was being better at cross-cultural working with colleagues based in their organisations' offices in other countries.

The type of role that the volunteer carried out did have an impact on outcome. Those who had worked in community capacity building or training, or were involved in direct service delivery during their placement were more likely to be involved in community, social or political action after their placement.

There was also a difference in those volunteers who had recently returned and those who had volunteered a long time ago. Those who volunteered in earlier decades were more likely to be active post placement, but this may just be because they have had more time in which to be active.

There were no significant differences of outcomes between different genders, or the type of partner placed with, or whether the volunteers were living in or away from the community with which they were working.

Identified impacts from post-placement outcomes

Can any long-term impacts be attributed to the outcomes identified above? The impact of changes at an individual and personally experienced level are easier to identify; it is more challenging to assess what impact these changes may have more broadly and more long term. Nevertheless, some impacts have been identified, and have been categorised as occurring at four different levels: **personal; community; within existing organisations and structures; and through the establishment of new initiatives.**

i. Personal (daily influence, foundations, step-change in views)

Many volunteers recounted how the outcomes of their volunteering have led to significant changes at a personal level. For many this is linked to career development and opportunities. For some it is about an increased commitment to ongoing learning and development, and for others it is more about changes in practice or in career direction. Some felt more confident to undertake more formal volunteering positions as a result of skills and confidence gained on their placement and they talked about the impact they are able to have through these positions. Many of the corporate volunteers interviewed had, since their placement, been promoted within their company and some spoke of greater job satisfaction, pride in the company and enthusiasm to remain within the company. They felt that their promotion had been supported by skills enhanced through their placement.

ii. Community

A number of volunteers who have become involved with influencing friends and family say that those they had influenced were now more likely to donate money to support organisations working to support social justice, poverty reduction, inequality, and humanitarian action. Others have influenced people who have subsequently gone on to volunteer nationally or internationally.

Some participants talked about their role in influencing policy change, describing how their energy and enthusiasm for particular issues has been sparked or reignited by their placement, and how the knowledge gained has increased their levels of confidence and inspired them to take action in areas of policy such as the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), gender, fair trade and environmental campaigns.

iii. Within existing organisations/structures

Some volunteers recounted how their use of the skills, knowledge and learning gained during their placement has enabled them to be more effective in their current role, and some have been motivated to improve conditions within their organisations. For example, some have been involved in the development, promotion, and management of standards within either paid or voluntary positions since their placement. One corporate volunteer set up an informal network of employees to improve company performance. Others in the corporate sector promoted volunteering within the company, which has resulted in more people applying to take up these opportunities and stronger partnerships to support volunteering placements.

Many of those working in the international development sector have applied learning from their placement to their current role. They said that their placement has given them an insight into the perspective of the communities with whom they are now working, as well as an increased awareness of the importance of working in a participatory way. They feel that these insights have enabled them to design better programmes and be more effective in other areas such as advocacy, fundraising, donor management and campaigning.

iv. New initiatives

Some participants made strong links between their placement experience and them establishing groups, networks and organisations. In some cases these are very informal arrangements, but in other cases they are formal organisations. Many are quite new and have not been running long enough to see any clear impact, but others have been established for a considerable period. South-South international volunteers were particularly active and involved in establishing new initiatives after their placement.

Youth volunteers in particular have also been active in establishing more informal networks and groups, and since they have not been in existence for as long, have not had sufficient time for impacts to be clearly understood and defined.

What changes happen during volunteer placement?

A **change in attitude**, both externally in terms of how volunteers interact with others, and internally in relation to an increase in self-awareness, was identified as a major change across all types of volunteer. Many identified a clear link to an increase in confidence, and for some, increased resilience and adaptability were felt to be significant, with many mentioning thinking more positively and an appreciation for difference and diversity.

The most significant change expressed was in cultural awareness, with volunteers becoming more cognisant of cultural sensitivities, placing more emphasis on relationship building and reflecting on their own previously held views. In the interviews, over half of the volunteers expressed an understanding of how and why preconceptions of the country and culture in which they were placed may have been inaccurate, and how individual behaviour has an impact on interaction and the development of relationships. In addition, increased creativity, greater flexibility and patience were frequently mentioned as outcomes. Some talked about an increase or decrease in faith or spirituality, and others spoke of an increased awareness of the perspectives of other religions.

All volunteers found that they experienced shifts – to varying degrees – in their understanding of development and their attitudes towards inequality and social justice. These encompassed a broad range of issues, including corruption, injustice within organisations, developing their own thinking on inequality and injustice on a personal level, and discrimination relating to disability, ethnicity, culture, gender and sexuality. Awareness of poverty, equality and injustice, as well as community challenges and needs, and the merits of volunteering were also identified, with some volunteers describing their experience as helping to ground them in realities.

Acquisition of a broad range of skills, knowledge and learning

during placement, which reflects not only the diversity of volunteer roles undertaken, but also on how the acquisition of new knowledge is strongly associated with volunteering, even when volunteers are professionally skilled prior to placement. The new knowledge also leads to changes in attitude and behaviour through increased confidence and motivation.

The study showed that this knowledge and learning occurs at different levels – country, state/institutional, community, and individual. At **country level**, this included a new understanding of culture, religions, and diversity; at **state/institutional level**, this included politics and policy, how government operate, how donors work, governance, and legal rights.

At **community level**, this included knowledge of traditions and practices, grassroots working, stigma, community engagement, participatory approaches, and local politics. **Individual learning** included motivations for change, understanding how people learn, behaviour change, the impact of faith, and the merits of volunteering.

The development of new networks, contacts, friendships and relationships was a frequently referred to change during the course of volunteer placements. This included new personal and professional connections with both people from the placement country and other volunteers. Many volunteers also noted how their placement experience influenced the way in which they built and developed personal and professional relationships.

Increased confidence was a significant theme throughout the responses, with the placement experience and sense of achievement contributing to an increase in their confidence.

An increased sense of motivation, which included an increased commitment to the work they were undertaking, personal drive and efforts to address issues relating to increases in their awareness – for example, being more motivated to tackle inequality and injustice in response to experiencing it. Some respondents referred to becoming more **adaptable** as a result of their placement, specifically in having to work and live in new and sometimes changing settings and contexts where their expectations were challenged.

Finally, **increased resilience** was mentioned, by many, often in relation to other factors such as developing and using new skills in new environments. Some volunteers experienced a change in their behaviour in relation to living and/or working with limited resources, which some linked to adaptability and resilience.

Not all changes identified, however, were perceived as positive; some talked about a decrease in confidence and even a decrease in patience. A number said that they had become disillusioned with development, and in particular the work of INGOs, during their placement.



Local teacher Shila Dhakal donates her spare time to talk to children in Lamjung, Nepal, about school and earthquake preparedness.



7-year-old Blessing Asokiyine (centre) with her classmate Klevin Atinga and VSO volunteer Mary Carnable, at Goriko kindergarten in Bolgatanga, Ghana.

Do different volunteer types experience different changes?

A change in attitude was noted by all volunteers, irrespective of their gender, type of partner placed with, length of placement, type of role, sector of placement, urban or rural location, living in the community that they were working with or away from the community, and initial motivation to volunteer. New skills, learning, and knowledge also featured heavily as big changes, and increased confidence was a commonly occurring theme. The study did, however, identify some variations in the levels of changes across different types of volunteer.

Age: a change in awareness of both culture and environment appear greater for those volunteers who were younger at the time of their placement, and they also experienced significant increases in confidence compared to older volunteers, who were more likely to experience changes in motivation and skills and in broadening networks and contacts, although younger volunteers also made many new connections. Increased resilience and adaptability were also key themes among younger volunteers.

Gender: apart from a heightened awareness of gender issues or a subsequent interest and/or career move in gender issues, there were no recorded differences in levels of awareness or other changes between different genders.

Length of placement: those who volunteer for a shorter period of time tended to place greater emphasis on new networks. Increased adaptability was mentioned as a key change for short-term volunteers; however, short-term placements were less likely to bring about lasting impacts and benefits in comparison to long-term placements.

Area of placement: for volunteers placed in Africa and Central America, there appeared to be a higher level of poverty

awareness, with a significant change of awareness of poverty for volunteers with placements in Africa compared to Asia. Volunteers placed in Africa also identified a big increase in confidence and an increased ability to live within limited resources, compared to those placed in Asia, who were more likely to experience an increase in the size of their networks. National volunteers who were placed in locations away from their home did become more aware of development issues, although they experienced lower levels of cultural awareness than other volunteer types. International North to South volunteers tended to experience lower levels of motivation, with national volunteers in the South reporting slightly higher levels. International North to South volunteers also made specific reference to increased awareness of culture, development, community needs, challenges and inequality. For international South-South volunteers, increased awareness of culture emerged as the major change in awareness, with some mention of poverty and development and an increased awareness of community challenges.

Length of time since placement: those who volunteered recently showed lower levels of cultural awareness, but growing levels of awareness of development issues, power dynamics, and community challenges. Those who volunteered a longer time ago had high levels of awareness of development issues and were more likely to have subsequently established a career in development.

Corporate: volunteers from the corporate sector experienced lower levels of change generally, particularly in motivation, although they had slightly higher levels of change in attitude and self-awareness compared to other types of volunteer. New relationships and networks with their volunteer colleagues emerged as an important change for them during their placement.

What drives these changes?

The full context of the individual volunteer needs to be taken into account in order to fully understand the drivers and factors behind the changes that occur during placement. This includes prior community, social or political action, the influence of family and friends, and the motivations for volunteering. The volunteers rarely expressed an explicit connection between their previous activities and influences and the changes they experienced; nevertheless, it is interesting to look at the factors that lead people to volunteer and the extent of the community, social and political action they undertake before their placements.

Motivations for volunteering

In terms of motivations for volunteering, a desire to make a difference is the most significant driving factor, with career development and direction also being significant. Many volunteers mentioned making use of existing skills, suggesting that professional volunteering has particular appeal to volunteers with specific skills. Family and friends were also observed to have an impact on volunteer motivations, and international North-South volunteers are more likely to be motivated by the prospect of adventure.

Pre-placement community, social and political action

The volunteers who participated in the study were involved in a diverse range of pre-placement action, which varied greatly both in terms of the scope of activities and the depth of engagement. Donating to charities was the most common form of action, followed by grassroots community work, influencing friends and family, campaigning and advocacy, and formal volunteering positions. Only seven per cent of survey respondents said that they were not involved in any such activities before their placement.



Corporate volunteer Jenny Hoevenagel with members of the Lacan Kow Lewet youth co-operative group in Gulu, Uganda.

Acquisition of new knowledge during placement

New and additional skills, knowledge and learning gained during placement are significant drivers of the changes in understanding, attitude and behaviours, even for those who already have professional skills. In particular, many international participants said that, prior to their placement, they had anticipated sharing their skills, but the reality was that they learnt much more than they were able to pass on to others.

Other influencing factors

Barriers, challenges, and dealing with the unexpected emerged clearly as factors that influence volunteers during their placements. How they deal with and interpret them is likely to be linked to changes in understanding, attitude and behaviour. In many cases they did not lead to negative changes and outcomes. Some respondents did refer to increased cynicism and scepticism on issues such as development and corruption. Simultaneously however, this was linked to increased awareness in these areas and for some, also led to higher levels of motivation and greater clarity on how they could bring about change.

Frequently mentioned challenges and barriers related to organisations and people with which volunteers mostly interacted. VSO country offices came in for a mix of praise and criticism with the challenges relating to levels of support provided to volunteers. Differing power dynamics and communication styles were identified as challenges. However, responses also suggest that finding ways around these issues can be an important part of the volunteering experience. A range of other issues were mentioned, ranging from personal challenges, such as dealing with loneliness, and a sense of being overwhelmed by the scale of community needs such as poor infrastructure, civil unrest and corruption.

In terms of surprises and unexpected factors during placements that influenced changes, responses varied considerably and were often specific to individual volunteers. However common themes included shock at the realities of poverty and inequality, the actions of politicians and attitudes towards them, surprise that things were not as bad as expected, and, in some cases, surprise by their own actions and reactions. Aspects of inequality that surprised volunteers ranged from local perspectives on gender, hierarchy, religion and tribal divisions. Exposure to these inequalities often elicited a strong emotional reaction in volunteers who described feeling anger and frustration. Interestingly, some of the UK-based exchange volunteers were more shocked by the poverty that they encountered on their UK placement than their overseas placement. In some cases, this highlighted the importance of good governance, which could influence career aspirations.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed methodological approach, based on three stages of interconnected research activity involving data collection: an interactive web-based discussion platform; in-depth semi-structured interviews; and an online survey. Participants were drawn from a network of approximately 15,000 returned VSO volunteers on the alumni database. The discussion platform received responses from around 600 participants, a total of 63 interviews were carried out, and the survey was completed by 2,735 respondents. A literature review was also carried out prior to the study.

The volunteers were categorised according to the type of VSO placement or programme they undertook, falling into one of seven types:

- i. **International North-South volunteers** where the volunteer is recruited from a country in the global North and placed in a country in the global South.
- ii. **International South-South volunteers** where the volunteer is recruited from a country in the global South and placed in another country in the global South.
- iii. **Corporate volunteers** that typically take part in a volunteering scheme supported by their corporate employer organisation.
- iv. **National International Citizen Service (ICS) volunteers** who are volunteers from the global South aged 18-25 that team up with UK volunteers to undertake three month placements in their country (sometimes in their own community but often in another part of the country);
- v. **Youth for Development (Y4D) volunteers** that participated in a one-year volunteer scheme (which is no longer operating) for young people from the UK aged 18-25 years of age. Volunteers were expected to have had some previous work experience.
- vi. **Global Xchange volunteers** from the UK. This scheme preceded International Citizen Service and involved UK volunteers aged 18-25 years of age undertaking a three-month placement in a country in the global South alongside a national volunteer counterpart and then also a three-month placement in the UK.
- vii. **Polvol parliamentary volunteers** who undertake short-term placements to help international partners strengthen their advocacy and campaigns, influence national policies and support the capacity of elected representatives.

Conclusion

To sum up, this study shows that those who volunteer tend to behave and act differently as a result of their placement and have development impacts in their own communities. With more attention being given to the need for global action on global issues, volunteering-for-development organisations are also realising that their networks of alumni may be more inclined, because of their volunteering experience, to lend support to campaigns and undertake further action.



VSO 1.7024

100 London Road
Kingston upon Thames
KT2 6QJ
UK

+44(0)2087807500

enquiry@vsoint.org
vsointernational.org

Voluntary Service Overseas is registered
in England (number 00703509). Charity
Registration 313757 (England and Wales)
SCO39117 (Scotland).

