

**An overview of Comhlámh's research into  
The Impact of International Volunteering on Host Organisations in India and  
Tanzania.**

This paper presents the main findings of research commissioned by Comhlámh<sup>1</sup> into the impact of international volunteering on host projects and communities in India and Tanzania. This research was undertaken as part of the work of Comhlámh's Volunteering Options Programme, which is responding to the growing interest amongst the Irish public in shorter-term volunteering placements in developing countries.

The Volunteering Options programme has developed a Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Agencies and a Volunteer Charter for individuals going on placements overseas. Input from organisations and communities in the global south that host volunteers is a key element of developing best practice, and research into the perspectives of a selection of groups was commissioned in order to ensure wider participation in the documents' content.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 12 organisations in Tanzania and 10 in India, all of which have experience of hosting international volunteers. The data collection was supplemented by four focus groups with representatives from host organisations and host communities. Key areas of focus included: organisations' experiences of working with international volunteers; their relationships with organisations that send volunteers to them; their comments on the Volunteer Charter and Code of Practice; and their suggestions for the future development of international volunteering.

The paper discusses the background to the research, and outlines some of its main findings and suggestions for future developments. Recommendations arising from the responses are outlined and summarised below:

1. Sending organisations should ensure the participatory involvement of host organisations in the selection, recruitment, development education, and training of international volunteers.
2. Sending organisations should ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of volunteering.
3. Sending organisations should publish case studies of successful volunteering to guide and motivate new volunteers.
4. Sending organisations should place volunteers with relevant skills as required by the host projects.
5. Comhlámh should incorporate the findings of the research with host organisations into the Code of Practice and Volunteer Charter.
6. Comhlámh should facilitate the development of a Code of Practice to be adopted by the host organisations.
7. Future research should be considered on a number of topics, to increase awareness of all aspects of international volunteering.

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<sup>1</sup> Established in 1975, Comhlámh is the Irish Association of Development Workers.