

Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Agencies

11 principles of good
practice in volunteering for
global development

2013 edition



1

Have volunteer programmes based on realistic aims and objectives with appropriate and useful volunteer roles.

2

Provide sufficient resources and support to run volunteer programmes in an efficient and sustainable manner.

3

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

4

Provide potential volunteers with free, fair and unbiased information about the organisation and volunteer placements.

5

Use fair, consistent and transparent recruitment procedures.

6

Assist and provide for the varying support needs of volunteers.

7

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

8

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

9

Provide debriefing for returned volunteers.

10

Undertake ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

11

Provide recognition to volunteers for their contribution to development whilst overseas and give them information on how they can further contribute to development at home.

The Comhlámh Code of Good Practice (CoGP) for Volunteer Sending Agencies is a set of standards for organisations involved in facilitating international volunteer placements in developing countries. The focus is to ensure overseas volunteering has a positive impact for the three main stakeholders: the volunteer, the sending agency, and the local project and community. Additionally, it reflects a number of core values. These are: partnership, quality, security, encouraging appropriate volunteer attitudes, valuing volunteering, sustainability, development education, solidarity and the importance of contributing to development.

Acknowledgements

Comhlámh would like to thank the members of the Volunteering Options Working Groups 2005 – 2013 and the wider group of signatories for their contributions in shaping the CoGP implementation process and the accompanying self-audit tool.

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

Contents

Part 1—Introduction and Guidelines:	
Introduction to Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice	4
Implementation of the Code of Good Practice	6
How to complete the self-audit tool	7
Sample Indicator Tables	11/12
Part 2—Self-Audit Tool:	
Volunteer Sending Agency Information 2013	13/14
Principle 1	15
Principle 2	18
Principle 3	21
Principle 4	26
Principle 5	30
Principle 6	35
Principle 7	40
Principle 8	46
Principle 9	54
Principle 10	57
Principle 11	63
Declaration	67
Glossary	68

Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Agencies 2013 Edition

Introduction

The Code of Good Practice (CoGP) has been developed in close consultation with Irish volunteer sending agencies (VSAs), returned volunteers and with a range of partners that host international volunteers. The number of principles and indicators in the 2013 edition of the CoGP remains the same as those in the 2012 version. The content of the CoGP will be revised and updated in 2015 to incorporate emerging best practice trends in the sector, as well as clarify indicators and evidence as required.

What is Comhlámh's history with good practice standards in volunteering abroad?

As the Irish Association of Development Workers and Volunteers, Comhlámh has a long history of working with and supporting volunteers and development workers in Ireland.

Comhlámh's Options and Issues in Volunteering for Development Group undertook significant work from the mid-1990s until 2004. It questioned the changing role of the development worker and volunteer within wider debates on aid and development. The group produced a discussion paper entitled *Role of the Development Worker in Relation to the Host Community* (1995/6) which culminated in a video *We Still Want You But...* (1997). A series of training workshops were developed to encourage members of the public to critically reflect on the role of the development worker and volunteer; these workshops have been a platform for ongoing discussion in this area.

The closure in the early 2000s of the Agency for Personal Service Overseas (APSO), the Irish government funded volunteer programme, signalled a shift away from sending large numbers of expatriates to work in developing countries towards placing greater emphasis on working with partners.

Furthermore, with an increase in public interest in volunteering overseas on a short-term basis, the role of the volunteer began to change. This led to the emergence of many new VSAs from 2000, while other more established organisations focused on adapting their programmes to respond to this change in demand. The result was a very diverse sector—including short and long term placement organisations, professional and non-professional, for-profit and not-for profit, lay and religious—focusing on different areas of development.

Comhlámh noted that in such a rapidly changing milieu the basic core issues of development (and the needs of the local community and volunteer) can sometimes be eclipsed by more pressing organisational needs. In what was (and still is in many countries) a largely unregulated sector, Comhlámh recognised the opportunity to focus on these issues. It strongly promotes responsible, responsive international volunteering and encourages Irish volunteer sending agencies to work in a collaborative environment to examine current practice and construct a coherent set of principles that would create a shared vision for good practice and accountability in volunteer programmes.

Through working collaboratively with Irish VSAs, volunteers and representatives of local projects, Comhlámh developed a Code of Good Practice which is now recognised internationally and has been adapted for use in other countries.

The Code of Good Practice is the gold standard—there is nothing standing up to this across Europe”.



-Foley, S, Review of Comhlámh's Strategic Plan, July 2008, p33.



Who can use the Code of Good Practice?

The CoGP can be used as a tool by any organisation or group sending volunteers overseas in a development context, whether small or large, for-profit or not-for-profit, faith-based or secular. The CoGP principles and indicators have been designed to accommodate a broad range of programme types including organisations targeting volunteers participating in short-term non-professional placements, or long-term highly-skilled placements. Signing up to the CoGP and participating in the formal monitoring and validation processes is only open to organisations that:

- Have an international volunteer programme in place;
- Are legally registered as either a company or charity in Ireland or Northern Ireland for over a year;
- Have had a volunteer programme operating for a minimum of a year;
- Include a development impact / awareness focus to its programme;
- Commit to working towards the principles outlined in the CoGP;
- Complete and submit the self-audit tool to Comhlámh annually;
- Attend at least one of two peer support meetings annually in the spirit of shared learning;
- Complete and submit the CoGP self-audit prior to being reviewed for consideration as full CoGP signatory member;
- Complete and submit a Code of Good Practice self-audit prior to being reviewed for consideration as full CoGP signatory member;
- Actively work towards implementing the minimum standards outlined within the self-audit;
- Participate in an external audit in the first year of becoming a signatory and participate in other auditing processes periodically thereafter;
- Inform all persons within the organisation—including new members of staff—of its status as a signatory and ensure that all individuals understand and support the decision to be a signatory to the CoGP;
- Inform all members of staff about the responsibilities and obligations of being a signatory to the CoGP.

How was the CoGP developed?

The CoGP has been developed in close consultation with Irish VSAs, returned volunteers and through engagement with partners that host international volunteers. The process of jointly developing the principles began in 2005, indicators were formulated through a series of consultative workshops in 2006, and a self-audit tool was developed in 2007. In 2008, external auditing of the CoGP implementation was introduced to enable VSAs to have an independent view of the strengths and weaknesses of their programmes.

Additional supports were established to improve work practices and exchange of information between signatories of the CoGP. This includes a peer support mechanism which was developed to encourage VSAs to share good practice with one another and a Volunteering Options Working Group (VOWG) which convenes twice annually to guide the development of the CoGP.

In 2012 minimum standards were introduced to ensure that all signatories of the CoGP are able to demonstrate a minimum duty of care to volunteers and the communities with which they work. This is a pilot process which has been reviewed in 2013 and continues to be refined. In 2014 signatories will be rated according to whether they meet the minimum standards; those that have attained the minimum standards will publicly be recognised for doing so.

Benefits of implementing the CoGP

- Better experience and quality of programme for volunteers;
- Local partners are actively involved at each stage of the volunteer cycle. This enables volunteer programmes to remain well-informed about local development and improves the overall impact of the programmes on local partners and their communities;
- Greater credibility and legitimacy with funders, potential volunteers and the public;
- Sharing of experiences and accessing support from other sending agencies through the peer support system and other Comhlámh supports;
- Sending agencies refine their work practices, develop effective management styles, learn how to use resources meaningfully and improve their programmes through continuous analysis; this ensures that all participants' needs are appropriately addressed.

Implementation of the Code of Good Practice

Signatories to the Code of Good Practice have agreed to the following steps:

Step 1:

Signing up: a) Meet with Comhlámh staff to discuss information about your organisation's volunteer programmes, b) Complete a Pre-signatory Form attaching proof of registration as a company or charity, c) complete a Volunteer Sending Agency Information Form, and d) Submit a completed self-audit by 2 December. All signatory forms can be obtained from, and returned to, Shannette (Shannette@comhlamh.org).

Step 2:

Annual Self-audits: Signatory organisations are required to submit a completed self-audit on an annual basis (by **2nd December in 2013**). This self-audit should include a point-in-time assessment of the VSA's implementation of the standards and outline areas to strengthen and improve within the coming year. Comhlámh will review the completed self-audits annually, record whether a signatory complies with the minimum standards and will draw a comparison with the previous year's submission to ensure continuous programme improvements. Submitting the self-audit on an annual basis allows your organisation to monitor growth and assess the implementation of the Code of Good Practice.

Step 3:

Peer Support: Active participation by VSAs in a peer support network is a key element of implementing the CoGP. Peer support meetings are held at least twice a year to facilitate sharing of information and exchange of ideas. Issues-based meetings are also held on an *ad hoc* basis enabling participants to have in-depth discussion on a topic that is of particular relevance to their organisation. Signatory organisations are also invited to utilise the 'CoGP Signatories' area of the Volunteering Options website as a space to share policies and documents, download useful resources and post comments on areas of interest.

Step 4:

External audit: All volunteer sending agencies are required to undertake an external audit shortly after becoming a signatory to the Code of Good Practice. It is strongly recommended that the agency then undertakes a desk-based review every three years thereafter. Participating in these processes enhance learning and programme improvement.

The external audit involves the following steps:

- After receiving a completed self-audit, Comhlámh shares it with an independent auditing consultant who formulates questions to review with the VSA;
- The auditor then visits the VSA for a day and goes through the self-audit, checks documentation and verifies processes;
- The auditor drafts a report assessing the VSA's implementation of the CoGP compared with their self-assessment. The report makes recommendations for further programme development, particularly in relation to meeting the minimum standards. Areas where the VSA can benefit from capacity building are highlighted;
- The auditor explains the assessment outlined in the report and discuss how the VSA may prioritise the recommendations;
- Small capacity building grants are made available by a review panel to enable audited VSAs to implement some of the recommendations of the audited reports.

The desk-based review involves the following steps:

- After receiving a completed self-audit, Comhlámh introduces the VSA to the external consultant so they can organise logistics for the review;
- The VSA provides the external consultant with documentation on programme policies and practices prior to the meeting;
- The external consultant meets the VSA for a half day to discuss their progress since the external audit and assesses how the VSA is performing against the minimum standards and any other matters relevant to the CoGP;
- The auditor drafts a report assessing the VSA's implementation of the CoGP and makes recommendations for further programme development.

The auditor's report is confidential to Comhlámh, the auditor, the signatory organisation and a review panel which comprises representatives of Comhlámh and Dóchas.

How to complete the CoGP self-audit tool

Length of time required to complete the self-audit: The length of time required to complete the self-audit will depend on several key factors: 1) if the document has been submitted in previous years, 2) the number of people inputting into the document, 3) the accessibility of the documents and records, 4) the availability and length of time required to liaise with other staff members and 5) the size of the organisation and its programme(s). Generally speaking, the full completion time of the self-audit could take between 2 – 5 working days. It is advisable that the self-auditors begin the process several weeks in advance of the due date to ensure that the document is submitted on time.

The completion time can be reduced if all relevant staff members participate in the process to ensure full and complete information is available. For future submissions, the process should be quicker if good records are maintained as many of the indicators will remain the same year-on-year.

Submitting evidence with the self-audit: Submitting evidence along with the self-audit is only required if an organisation has assessed itself as having met all fifteen minimum standards. In all fifteen minimum standards are not met, VSAs are not required to submit evidence. Please read the Minimum Standards heading on page 8 for more information.

Submissions of self-audit tool: Please note:

- 1) Self-audits need to be **emailed** by the 2 December deadline to shannette@comhlamh.org;
- 2) A printed and signed **declaration sheet** (page 67) must be posted to Comhlámh to the attention of Shannette Budhai.
- 3) If submitting evidence, please posted **or** email them to Shannette Budhai.

The self-auditors: Ideally the self-audit should be completed by at least two individuals. The perspective of multiple persons allows for richer feedback, greater understanding of internal processes and procedures, enables discussions to take place, identifies future areas of work to be undertaken, and gleans the perspectives of different individuals within the organisation. One of the self-auditors should be responsible for the volunteer programme. Additional contributors (to the document in part or in its entirety) could include a manager, programme director, board member, financial administrator, development education coordinator, communications manager and, if possible, your local partner(s).

Layout of the self-audit tool:

Part 1 contains the introduction and guidelines for completion. Part 2, the self-audit tool, is comprised of three different sections:

- 1) Volunteer Sending Agency Information 2013,
- 2) Code of Good Practice Principles with Indicator Tables, and
- 3) Declaration to be signed by the person responsible for the volunteer programme and Director/board member.

There is also a checklist at the end of the document for self-auditors to use to ensure they have completed the self-audit.

Volunteer Sending Agency Information 2013: This page has been designed to learn more about the profile of each VSA in the submission year. The information provided gives Comhlámh a better understanding of the kind of work undertaken by the organisation and the profile of volunteers. When potential volunteers come directly to Comhlámh as a first port-of-call, it is useful to have a detailed profile of all the volunteer sending agencies so to direct potential volunteers to the relevant organisations. Additionally, it allows us to understand sector-wide volunteering trends. Statistical information about VSAs in Ireland also offers useful comparisons to the voluntary sector in other European countries and also around the world.

Once all self-audits have been received from VSAs, the information will be aggregated and analysed to generate an overview of the work being carried out by all signatories to the CoGP. Aside from external auditors, specific information relating to each VSA will **not** be shared with third parties. The aggregated

statistical information of **all** VSAs will be shared within the CoGP network whilst respecting the anonymity of each organisation.

It is very important that all fields of this information sheet be completed. Do not leave any reporting area blank. If the self-auditors are unsure of what kind of information is being requested, please contact the Volunteering Quality Project Officer at 01-478-3490. If the self-auditors do not have access to the kinds of information being requested, please make note of it by writing 'information unavailable'. If the answer is complex and requires an explanation, please insert a comment as a footnote providing clarification.

Code of Good Practice principles and indicator tables: The CoGP sets out 11 different principles that incorporate aspects of volunteer programme management, from initial programme design to continued volunteer engagement upon return. These principles are stated at the start of each section of the self-audit with a rationale provided for why the principle exists. 'Training and Other Resources' are also listed under each principle to provide VSAs with supports to strengthen and develop programme areas that directly relate to the principle. Following the introduction of each principle are a number of indicators. An *indicator* is a statement which supports the overarching idea behind a principle being met. (See glossary for further definitions.) The number of indicators will vary according to the principle. There are 41 indicators covering the 11 principles in the 2013 version of the self-audit. Each indicator has its own table. The purpose of completing the indicator tables is to allow the self-auditors to determine if specific aspects of their programme are sufficiently being met in their organisation.

After completing each table, the self-auditors will be able to see how well policies have been developed within their organisation and will also be able to identify outstanding areas where further policy development could take place.

Minimum Standards: In completing the Code of Good Practice, a volunteer sending agency is making a *commitment* to implementing good practice in their work. Beginning in 2014, organisations that can demonstrate that they have *implemented* a minimum set of good practice standards as outlined by the CoGP will be formally recognised for doing so.

The self-audit outlines forty-one indicators that cover all eleven principles of the Code of Good Practice. Fifteen of the forty-one indicators have been identified as 'minimum standards'. Thus, a set of fifteen minimum standards (i.e., fifteen indicators) have been identified as being essential to every volunteer programme. These fifteen minimum standards are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Principle 1, Indicator 1 | 9) Principle 7, Indicator 1 |
| 2) Principle 1, Indicator 2 | 10) Principle 8, Indicator 1 |
| 3) Principle 2, Indicator 1 | 11) Principle 8, Indicator 5 |
| 4) Principle 3, Indicator 1 | 12) Principle 9, Indicator 1 |
| 5) Principle 4, Indicator 1 | 13) Principle 10, Indicator 1 |
| 6) Principle 4, Indicator 2 | 14) Principle 11, Indicator 1 |
| 7) Principle 5, Indicator 2 | 15) Principle 11, Indicator 3 |
| 8) Principle 6, Indicator 1 | |

If a VSA has assessed itself as having met **all** fifteen minimum standards, the organisation will be required to submit evidence relating to that standard to Comhlámh. In this case, VSAs are asked to submit as many pieces of evidence that they feel sufficiently support a minimum standard indicator being met. Thus, if an organisation has six forms of evidence that supports an indicator being in place, they do not need to submit all six pieces of evidence; rather, they may submit two or three pieces of evidence that are of high quality and that should serve to sufficiently demonstrate that the idea articulated by the indicator is being met. If additional documents are required, the organisation will be contacted by the Volunteering Quality Project Officer.

VSAs are **not** required to submit evidence for non-minimum standard indicators.

Completing the indicator tables involves the following steps:

Step 1:

Read the indicator listed on the first row. Below the stated indicator is a list of *Possible Evidence*. This list of evidence may be used by sending agencies to demonstrate that an indicator is being implemented. It is important to remember that this list is only included as a guideline and is not comprehensive.

Step 2:

After reading the indicator and the list of *Possible Evidence*, self-auditors must determine if the evidence is a) In Place (the organisation has this specific evidence available), b) Partially in Place (the organisation has developed some of the outlined evidence, but it is not yet complete), or c) Not in Place (the organisation does not have this specific evidence available). For evaluation purposes, it is very important that the self-auditors tick the 'In Place', 'Partially in Place' or 'Not in Place' box ensuring that no row of *Possible Evidence* is left blank. The VSA will **not** be marked down if they do not have all the *Possible Evidences* in place. We recognise that each volunteer programme is unique and that not all forms of evidence would apply to every organisation.

Step 3:

After ticking 'In Place', 'Partially in Place' or 'Not in Place' for each *Possible Evidence*, it is important for the self-auditors to state how this evidence is specifically being met under the column entitled 'Details of Evidence Available'. The evidence listed should be as detailed as possible and should include the specific names of documents used by the organisation; alternatively, the self-auditors could outline the policies and procedures the organisation has in place to indicate why evidence is marked as 'In Place', 'Partially in Place' or 'Not in Place'. It is important that the self-auditors use complete sentences when filling in this column as it makes it easier for Comhlámh and the external auditor to understand what is being communicated, and it eliminates the need to contact the VSA to seek further clarification after the self-audit has been submitted.

Step 4:

As the self-auditors complete the *Possible Evidence* section of the self-audit table, they may realise that the organisation is fulfilling the indicator with other forms of evidence not articulated under the *Possible Evidence* section. If this is the case, under the heading 'Other evidence to show indicator is in place', the self-auditors are given an opportunity to outline organisational processes, name documents and report other types of evidence that they have in place to show compliance with the indicator. It is not mandatory to complete this section but doing so can substantially improve the quality of the VSA's self-audit submission, especially if an organisation has ticked 'No' for many of the *Possible Evidence* suggested but still feel that the indicator is in place.

Step 5

If the VSA is completing the self-audit for the first time, or has made previous submissions, it is obligatory that the section entitled 'List progress made in this area since 2012' is completed. This gives Comhlámh and the external auditor an idea of what areas the VSA has worked on and identifies targeted supports that could be provided to the organisation. This section also recognises areas in which the VSA has developed strengths and may therefore be in a position to share their learning with the wider CoGP network.

Step 6

The final step in completing each table is to list the organisation's targeted activities under the section entitled 'List action points to be prioritised in 2014.' This space can be used to record matters to be addressed, identify areas of improvement and prioritise key areas to be worked on in the upcoming year. Implementing these changes can best be made if individuals are identified to carry out certain tasks within a specified time frame.

Example Tables

The table on page 11 is an example of an incomplete table and highlights the areas that should be completed by the self-auditors. The table on page 12 illustrates the kinds of details self-auditors are expected to provide.

Relevancy of the Principles and Indicators

The CoGP has been designed to accommodate a wide range of VSAs and all of the principles are therefore considered relevant to each organisation. It is essential that every field in the self-audit tool is completed and that sections are not left blank in order for Comhlámh to assess the overall level of implementation and to see where additional supports may be required.













Do funders encourage the use of the self-audit tool?

The self-audit tool provides a very simple and effective way of showing a funder that you are serious about good practice and that the organisation is putting important systems in place. Irish Aid—one of the main funders of development work in Ireland—requests that VSAs applying for funding under the Civil Society Fund be a signatory to the CoGP. By being an active signatory to the CoGP, a VSA demonstrates the level of commitment it has to good practice standards.

Troubleshooting

If the self-auditors are having difficulty completing the self-audit, please contact Shannette Budhai in Comhlámh at 01-478-3490 for a step-by-step guide on how to complete the document or to answer any queries.

Example of Incomplete Indicator Table

Principle 2, Indicator 2: Programme plans and budgets explicitly note how resources and support are provided to volunteers.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
POSSIBLE EVIDENCE	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and pre-departure supports provided to volunteers (including cost of trainings, materials, facilitators, etc.).	✓			 <div style="border: 1px solid #e91e63; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-left: 10px;"> Name specific documents available as evidence (e.g., Education Matters 2013 Sao Paulo Programme Budget). Alternatively, outline how the VSA's policies and processes demonstrate that this evidence is in place. </div>
	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and in-country supports provided to volunteers.		✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house debriefing; Calls placed from office; Counselling information. <div style="border: 1px solid #e91e63; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-left: 10px;"> Please use full and complete sentences when outlining details of the available evidence. </div>
	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and supports provided to volunteers on return (including costs of debriefing, follow-up, counselling, continuous engagement opportunities, etc.).	 <div style="border: 1px solid #e91e63; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-left: 10px;"> One of these boxes (In Place, Partially in Place, Not in Place) should be ticked. Do not leave blank. </div>			Not relevant.  <div style="border: 1px solid #e91e63; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-left: 10px;"> All indicators are seen as relevant to all volunteer sending agencies. </div>
Other Evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 	If a volunteer sending agency fulfils the objective outlined by the indicator in ways that are not suggested above, this space is available to outline additional ways in which the indicator is being met.				
2. 					
3. 					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 	It is important that this area is completed as the organisation can see the progress it has made. It also gives Comhlámh and the external auditor an idea of how your work has developed in the past year.				
2. 					
3. 					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion:					
1. 	It is important that action points are listed for the following year as it gives the organisation an understanding of the kind of work that needs to take place, identifies who will undertake certain responsibilities, and establishes a timeline for these activities.				
2. 					
3. 					

Example of Complete Indicator Table

Principle 2, Indicator 2: Programme plans and budgets explicitly note how resources and support are provided to volunteers.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
POSSIBLE EVIDENCE	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and pre-departure supports provided to volunteers (including cost of trainings, materials, facilitators, etc.).	✓			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of Education Matters programme budget which allocates €700 to train 30 volunteers is available; Copy of invoice from printers for pre-departure training materials; Copy of invoice for training two staff members in delivering the departure and debriefing sessions to volunteers.
	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and in-country supports provided to volunteers.			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As Education Matters volunteers are teachers, they are provided with an allowance for school supplies (chalk, notebooks, etc.). However, no specific budget line has been allocated, nor has a policy been established, as to the maximum reimbursement a volunteer can claim. A local mentor is available to provide guidance to volunteer on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis. Cost of such service varies from year-to-year, but an estimate can be drawn up and worked into future budget plans.
	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and supports provided to volunteers on return (including costs of debriefing, follow-up, counselling, continuous engagement opportunities, etc.).		✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debriefing is done in-house by trained staff members at low cost; Follow-up calls are placed 2 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months after arrival with negligible cost; Counselling information is sent by email to all returnees at no cost.
<p>Other Evidence to show that indicator is in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Education Matters pays for volunteers' security training and medical check-up. Education Matters' budget also lists the costs for each of these expenses. Security trainer invoice available. Copies of volunteers' medical check-up receipts kept; Medical reimbursement documentation available. 					
<p>List progress made in this area since 2012:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Two staff members went on pre-departure and debriefing training for trainers courses thereby eliminating the cost to hire external facilitators. No significant progress made in other areas relating to this indicator. 					
<p>List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate and add cost of in-country mentor, debriefing and any follow-up costs to budget plans. Programme director to complete task by March 2014. Budget for cost of school supplies which will be ordered locally to eliminate need for teachers having to buy supplies themselves. Volunteer Coordinator to complete task by July 2014. Draft reimbursement policy to teachers; to be completed by Volunteer Coordinator by November 2014. 					

Please note the number of volunteers that were abroad for the specified length of time	0 – 2 Weeks	3 – 4 Weeks	2 – 3 Months	4 – 6 Months	7 – 11 Months	1 – 2 Years	2+ Years
Are volunteers recruited for a specific skill set?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		If 'Yes', please list				
What kind of professional /non-professional background do your volunteers come from?					What percentage of your volunteers have prior experience working in development?		
What activities do your volunteers engage in when abroad?					For how many years has your organisation been sending volunteers overseas?		
How many volunteers participated in some form of pre-departure training?			State the hours or days in total (e.g., 4 hours or 2 days)				
How many volunteers participated in some form of debriefing?			State the hours or days in total (e.g., 4 hours or 2 days)				
Have you been in contact with another CoGP signatory this year (outside of formal Comhlámh meetings)?			If so, briefly describe the nature of this communication				
General comments and/or questions							
Director's signature							
Date self-audit completed							

1. Have volunteer programmes based on realistic aims and objectives with appropriate and useful volunteer roles.

Rationale:

In many developed countries, there is a demand from the public for overseas volunteer placements. This principle aims to ensure that volunteer programmes fit with local needs. Volunteers should have useful, rewarding placements that address relevant needs that are made in consultation with local partners.

Resources and Courses:

- Carmichael Centre Leadership & Governance training programme. See www.carmichaelcentre.ie for further information.
- Kimmage Capacity Development Services (formerly DTalk) courses: 'Evidence Based Planning—Demonstrating Needs and Results' and 'Outcome Mapping'. See www.kimmagedtalk.ie for further information.
- Education for Development produced a 'Volunteer Management Manual' which includes suggestions for interviewing and recruiting volunteers. It is available to download from the Member's Area of the Volunteering Options website.
- The Council of Europe produced 'International Voluntary Service', a programme planning training kit available to download from the Member's Areas of the Volunteering Options website.

MINIMUM STANDARD 1

Principle 1, Indicator 1: The VSA involves local partners in volunteer recruitment and selection.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Feedback from local partners or MOU/agreement identifying the needs and roles for volunteers in programme plans;				
	Examples of key inter-partner communications relating to volunteer recruitment and selection.				
<p>Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List progress made in this area since 2012:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					

MINIMUM STANDARD 2

MINIMUM STANDARD 2					
Principle 1, Indicator 2: The VSA ensures that their local partners are involved in programme design, planning and implementation.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Record of documentation shared with local partners on the organisation's planning processes and general operating policies and procedures;				
	Feedback from local partners on draft programme plans/designs;				
	Meeting minutes, emails, letters, and other forms of communication with local partners relating to programme planning.				
<p>Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List progress made in this area since 2012:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					

2. Provide sufficient resources and support to run volunteer programmes in an efficient and sustainable manner.

Rationale:

It is necessary that budgets for programmes are sufficient to ensure that they are well-run and to facilitate local partners' growth in a sustainable manner. Budgets should cover the training of local partner staff to allow them to provide services to local communities outside their volunteer programmes.

Resources and Courses:

- Kimmage Capacity Development Services (formerly DTalk) courses: 'Financial Management, Project Funding and Budget Management'; See www.kimmagedtalk.ie;
- Carmichael Centre 'Managing Money' courses; See www.carmichaelcentre.ie;
- Mango is a UK-based agency that works to help aid agencies and NGOs to strengthen their financial management systems; See www.mango.org.uk for further information;
- Civicus toolkits: 'Developing a Financing Strategy' and 'Financial Controls and Accountability' available at <http://www.civicus.org/new/default.asp>.

Minimum Standard 3

	Principle 2, Indicator 1: Programme plans and budgets explicitly note how resources and support are provided to local partners.	In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copies of MOUs/agreements between local partners and sending agencies that detail resources and supports provided to local partners;				
	Copies of annual programme plans, reports, tenders, etc. that outline how resources are spent to ensure the project is run efficiently;				
	Copies of annual programme plans, reports, etc. that outline how resources are spent to ensure the project becomes more sustainable by supporting the local economy, demonstrates the transfer of skills to locals, uses local talent in the project, etc.;				
	Details of training supports required by local partners in annual project plans;				
	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and supports provided to local partners;				
	Copies of annual programme plans/reports and budgets that detail resources and supports provided to local partners.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
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List progress made in this area since 2012:					
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List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1.					
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3.					

Principle 2, Indicator 2: Programme plans and budgets explicitly note how resources and support are provided to volunteers.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and pre-departure supports provided to volunteers (including cost of trainings, materials, facilitators, etc.);				
	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and in-country supports provided to volunteers;				
	Copies of programme plans and budgets that detail resources and supports provided to volunteers on return (including costs of debriefing, follow-up, counselling continuous engagement opportunities, etc.).				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

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

Rationale:

It is important that VSAs do not make false claims as to the efficacy of their programmes, or the extent to which volunteers can 'make a difference' to the lives of the people in the local communities. By being clear about their aims, values and ethos, VSAs will also help volunteers to see whether they are in agreement with them. Additionally, the principle aims to make sure that local partners and communities are portrayed pictorially in a positive and balanced manner.

Training and Resources:

- Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages (www.dochas.ie) ;
- Kimmage courses: 'Applying the Dóchas Code of Conduct on the Use of Images and Messages' and 'Working with the Media' (www.kimagedtalk.ie);
- Comhlámh's Guidelines for the use of Social Media in Volunteering.

Minimum Standard 4

Minimum Standard 4					
Principle 3, Indicator 1: The VSA develops and implements guidelines on good practice relating to marketing and imagery which also ensures that the local community is not put at risk or portrayed inaccurately.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Signatory to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages;				
	Copy of VSA's guidelines regarding external communication which reflects the principles of the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images & Messages;				
	Examples of VSA's use of imagery in materials that reflect the Dóchas guidelines;				
	Record of staff participation in training on the use of images;				
	Documentation that volunteers are made aware of the VSA's imagery policy including use of images on social media (e.g. volunteer training manual, signed copy of VSA's imagery policy).				
	Fundraising information given to volunteers include guidance on the use of images and messaging consistent with the VSA's policy;				
	Copy of VSA's guidelines on marketing and imagery shared with volunteers and suppliers (e.g., graphic designers);				
	Copy of feedback from local partners on the VSA's use of marketing and imagery.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

Principle 3, Indicator 2: All promotional and awareness-raising materials clearly reflect the aims, ethos and values of the VSA, including the organisation's concern for the protection of the local community.	In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
<div style="background-color: #4F7942; color: white; padding: 5px; writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); display: inline-block;">Possible Evidence</div> <p>Copies of messaging used in primary promotional media (e.g., website), additional promotional materials (e.g., flyers, advertisements) and strategy (e.g., strategic plan reflecting vision, mission and strategic objectives) that show consistency of messaging.</p>				
<p>Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 				
<p>List progress made in this area since 2012:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 				
<p>List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 				

Principle 3, Indicator 3: The volunteer's role description is clearly and simply stated in all promotional materials in a manner that will not raise unrealistic expectations about what the placement can achieve.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copy of the volunteer's role description;				
	Copies of promotional materials encouraging realistic volunteer expectations.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1.					
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List progress made in this area since 2012:					
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3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1.					
2.					
3.					

Principle 3, Indicator 4: Consultation takes place with local partners about promotional materials used by the VSA. Local partners are given an opportunity to review and enhance this material.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Minutes or other records from meetings with local partners regarding promotional materials;				
	Examples of the incorporation of this feedback outlining the changes to promotional materials.				
<p>Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List progress made in this area since 2012:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					

4. Provide potential volunteers with free, fair and unbiased information about the organisation and volunteer placements.

Rationale:

VSA's are encouraged to provide potential volunteers with lists of independent resources on volunteering overseas in order to encourage informed decision-making. For example, access to returned volunteers can assist potential volunteers in their decision making and ideally enable them to learn more about their host country and placement.

Training and Other Resources:

- Comhlámh's Volunteering Options website: www.volunteeringoptions.org
- 'Working for a Better World: A Guide to Volunteering in Global Development' (2nd edition) available from Comhlámh.
- Volunteer Ireland offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities in Ireland: <http://www.volunteer.ie/>.

Minimum Standard 5

Principle 4, Indicator 1: The VSA provides fair and balanced information about their organisation and placements.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Website screenshots detailing key organisational and placement information including an overview of the volunteer role(s), organisational values and aims, organisation status (e.g. charity, company, trust), and whether there is a programme cost;				
	Copy of information pack sent in response to queries about volunteering opportunities.				
<p>Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List progress made in this area since 2012:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					

Minimum Standard 6

Principle 4, Indicator 2: The VSA offers additional information about volunteering.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	A link is provided to the Volunteering Options section of the Comhlámh website;				
	The Comhlámh Signatory Logo is clearly visible on the VSA's website;				
	A link is provided to Comhlámh's Volunteer Charter on the VSA's website;				
	Briefing notes for staff responding to enquiries about volunteering that provides guidance on where to refer volunteers for other information on volunteering;				
	Links on the VSA's website to other sources of information about volunteering nationally and internationally;				
	Documentation showing that volunteers are told about Comhlámh's services to volunteers before they go overseas;				
	Documentation showing that volunteers are told about Comhlámh's services to volunteers after they return from overseas;				
	Copy of information pack sent in response to queries about volunteering opportunities.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1.					
2.					
3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
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2.					
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List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1.					
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3.					

Principle 4, Indicator 3: The VSA provides potential volunteers with unmediated access to former volunteers (subject to data protection regulations and consent).		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Database of returned volunteers who are willing to talk to potential volunteers;				
	Documented procedures/records for facilitating contact between outgoing volunteers and returned volunteers;				
	Programmes, emails, etc., documenting returned volunteers invited to speak at trainings or at information events.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

5. Use fair, consistent and transparent recruitment procedures.

Rationale:

This aims to ensure VSAs have standardised selection procedures which are made clear to volunteers from the outset. It is also a key tool in the effective screening of volunteers in relation to child and vulnerable adult protection.

Training and Other Resources:

- Volunteer Ireland courses: 'Volunteering Management' and 'Effective Recruitment and Selection of Volunteer's';
- 'Working for a Better World: A Guide to Volunteering in Global Development' (2nd edition) available from Comhlámh.
- Volunteer Ireland offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities in Ireland: <http://www.volunteer.ie/>.

Principle 5, Indicator 1: The VSA has written guidelines and procedures that set out how volunteers are recruited and/or selected.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copy of recruitment or selection guidelines;				
	Documents showing that the VSA responds to candidates regarding their selection process (e.g., emails, letters, template for responding to candidates, etc.).				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

Minimum Standard 7

Principle 5, Indicator 2: The VSA assesses potential volunteers against clear criteria which outlines the knowledge, skills and attributes required of volunteers for particular roles.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Volunteer role profiles outlining knowledge, skills and attributes required;				
	Sample application forms and/or interview records which incorporate screening questions asking about skills, experience, work with children and vulnerable adults.				
<p>Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List progress made in this area since 2012:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					

Principle 5, Indicator 3: Guidelines on safe recruitment practices are provided to those responsible for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Written guidance on how to screen applicants (e.g., for health, child and vulnerable adult protection needs/risks, protection of the local community, etc.);				
	Copy of training plan/induction for people involved in recruitment.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

Principle 5, Indicator 4: The VSA uses recruitment policies that reflect a commitment to promoting inclusiveness and diversity, complying with the spirit of the Irish Equality Legislation.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copy of organisation's diversity and equality policy;				
	Copy of recruitment and advertising strategies;				
	Record of staff participation in training on equality and diversity.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1.					
2.					
3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
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2.					
3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1.					
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6. Assist and provide for the varying support needs of volunteers.

Rationale:

This principle aims to ensure VSAs provide relevant supports to volunteers such as one-to-one or group support sessions. The existence of these supports should be made apparent to volunteers from the start of their engagement with the VSA.

Training and other Resources:

- Comhlámh's services for development workers and volunteers includes the provision of advice on social welfare entitlements and pensions. Contact janet@comhlamh.org;
- Volunteering Ireland courses: 'Volunteering Management' and 'Developing Your Volunteer Policy';
- Equality Authority documentation and publications;
- Kimmage Capacity Development Services (formerly DTALK) courses: 'Creative Facilitation', 'Learn to Debrief Humanitarian Workers Effectively', and 'How to be a Successful Trainer';
- The Free Management Library has a section entitled 'Information on Developing and Managing Volunteer Programmes'. Its links are often more relevant for domestic volunteering and to the situation in North America, but some of the articles may be of use. See www.managementhelp.org;
- National Youth Council of Ireland: 'Code of Good Practice, Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector' and 'Designated Person' training.

Minimum Standard 8

Principle 6, Indicator 1: The VSA has written guidelines which outline support services that volunteers can expect, including any in-country support provided.

In Place

Partially in Place

Not in Place

Details of Evidence Available

Possible Evidence

Copy of written policy/guidelines outlining in-country supports;

Copy of written policy/guidelines outlining supports available upon return;

Examples of ways in which these policies are advertised to volunteers (e.g., through websites, brochures and other publications);

Copy of volunteer manual/handbook outlining supports available.

Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List progress made in this area since 2012:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Principle 6, Indicator 2: Relevant staff receive training in assessing and supporting the needs of volunteers.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Qualification or CV demonstrating experience of relevant staff;				
	Records of staff training attendance and/or training manual;				
	Documentation designating a person responsible for reviewing training and support needs of volunteers as part of the annual planning process.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
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2.					
3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
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List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1.					
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Principle 6, Indicator 3: Volunteers are informed about how to protect their financial interests while overseas.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copy of information given to volunteers about protecting their financial interests within the Irish social welfare and pensions systems;				
	Examples of how volunteers are informed about budgeting, banking, monetary spending habits and protecting their financial interests in their country of destination.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

Principle 6, Indicator 4: Access to ongoing mentoring and support is available to volunteers throughout their placements.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Details of local partner/contact available to brief volunteers prior to departure;				
	Details of focal point/mentor designated to provide continuous assistance to volunteers during their placement;				
	Written outline of how mentoring/support services for volunteers operate;				
	Focal point is trained appropriately in dealing with incidents and accidents.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

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

Rationale:

VSA's are encouraged to review their training and induction needs. Training can be provided in-house, by outside agencies, or by a mix of both. It may also be provided pre-departure or in-country. Input and feedback from local partners is regarded as an important factor in the design of pre-departure training. Development education methodologies are deemed as a highly effective way to facilitate key areas of pre-departure training and preparation.

Training and Other Resources:

- Comhlámh's pre-departure training courses for short-term volunteers. Contact info@volunteeringoptions.org for details;
- Kimmage Capacity Development Services (formerly DTALK) courses: 'Initial Preparation for Working in the South' course and 'Creative Facilitation';
- Comhlámh 'Skills in Development Education' and other skills related courses;
- Comhlámh's Volunteer Charter;
- Volunteering Ireland courses: 'Volunteering Management' and 'Day-to-day Management of Volunteers';
- Volunteer Centres Ireland, 'Developing a Volunteer Policy' guide;
- PARTNERS Ireland, 'Partners Intercultural Companion to Training for Transformation.

Minimum Standard 9

Principle 7, Indicator 1: The VSA has clear guidelines on volunteer preparation, training and induction.				
	In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Written copy of guidelines on volunteer preparation, training and induction;			
	Copy of training and induction manuals used by staff or external provider;			
	Copy of volunteer manual;			
	Copy of in-country orientation materials.			
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:				
1.				
2.				
3.				
List progress made in this area since 2012:				
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2.				
3.				
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.				
1.				
2.				
3.				

Principle 7, Indicator 2: The VSA provides comprehensive preparation and training to volunteers.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Country specific information shared with volunteers;				
	Guidelines on protection of financial interests shared with volunteer;				
	Volunteer motivations and expectations reviewed with volunteers;				
	The role of the volunteer within the programme and broader development context is covered in volunteer training manual;				
	Information covering the history of the project and the VSA's work with local partner is covered in volunteer training manual;				
	Intercultural learning is covered in volunteer training manual;				
	Use of images and messages in social media (including the appropriate use of technology to ensure children/vulnerable adults are not put in danger and exposed to abuse or exploitation) is covered in volunteer training manual;				
	Supports available whilst on placement is covered in training manual;				
	Attendance list indicating volunteer's participation in training/induction provided to volunteers;				
	Training material instructing volunteers recruited for a specific skill set on how to apply their knowledge/training to overseas programme;				
Copy of training agenda.					
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1.					
2.					
3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
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2.					
3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1.					
2.					
3.					

Principle 7, Indicator 3: Volunteers are briefed and indicate an understanding of organisational policies and procedures specific to their role.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Policy on child/vulnerable adult protection signed by volunteer;				
	Policy on safety and security signed by volunteer;				
	Guidelines on gift-giving signed by volunteer;				
	Guidelines outlining insurance requirements signed by volunteer;				
	Guidelines on safe and ethical fundraising signed by volunteer;				
	Guidelines on appropriate use of technology including references to use of email, digital cameras, websites, internet, etc., signed by volunteer;				
	Copy of accommodation arrangements signed by volunteer;				
	Copy of medical/fitness certification requirements signed by volunteer or submitted by medical practitioner;				
	Copy of travel arrangements including visa requirements signed by volunteer.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
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List progress made in this area since 2012:					
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List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
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3.					

Principle 7, Indicator 4: The VSA has appropriately trained staff that provide training and induction to volunteers.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Qualification or CV demonstrating experience of relevant staff;				
	Records of staff training attendance and/or training manual;				
	Documentation designating a person responsible for reviewing training and support needs of volunteers as part of the annual planning process;				
	Guidelines on safe recruitment practices are provided to those responsible for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers;				
	Details of outsourced training;				
	Documents shared with local partners on the training volunteers receive from volunteer sending agency;				
	Details of in-country training and the staff responsible for its provision.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

Principle 7, Indicator 5: Local partners are supported in providing training and induction to volunteers.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copy of training and induction programmes used by local partners;				
	Attendance list indicating volunteer's participation in induction and briefing provided by local partners;				
	Feedback from volunteers on the training or induction they received from local partners;				
	Feedback from local partners on successes and challenges in carrying out training and induction.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

8. Ensure the protection, safety and well-being of volunteers and those they work with as far as possible.

Rationale:

Provision is made for the development and application of policies to ensure the protection of volunteers from potential harm, and from potentially harming others.

Training and Other Resources:

- Volunteering Ireland Safeguard Programme—Garda vetting;
- Kimmage Capacity Development Services (formerly DTALK) course: 'Child Protection';
- CARE publication: 'Critical Incident Protocol: Your Guide to Managing Critical Incidents';
- International Committee of the Red Cross publication: 'Staying Alive: Safety and Security Guidelines for Humanitarian Volunteers in Conflict Areas';
- Volunteer Organisers Linking Together (VOLT) publication: 'VOLT Working Group Report on Volunteer Vetting and Volunteer Screening';
- Department of Health & Children, 'Our Duty to Care: the Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People';
- The Keeping Children Safe Coalition comprises a number of aid and development agencies that work together to share experience and knowledge on how to identify a common approach to child protection. They have developed a range of resources and tools on the topic;
- Eurocheck Security Consultants.

Minimum Standard 10

Principle 8, Indicator 1: Programme plans include written assessments of security, travel and health risks specific to the country or region.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copies of policies relating to safety and security;				
	Copies of guidelines relating to personal health;				
	Written assessment of security, travel and health risks for each placement, reviewed on a bi-annual basis and prior to deployment;				
	Copies of risk assessment and management procedures and protocols;				
	Crisis management team is in place and relevant contact details shared;				
	Documentation of evacuation plan;				
	Signed documentation indicating that volunteers are aware of the security, travel and health risks before they embark on trip.				
<p>Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List progress made in this area since 2012:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					

Principle 8, Indicator 2: Records are maintained of placement-related injuries, sickness, accidents and fatalities, which are monitored to help assess and reduce further risk to volunteers.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Template for keeping records of placement-related health difficulties;				
	File of past placement-related incidents and actions taken.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place: 1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012: 1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion. 1. 2. 3.					

Principle 8, Indicator 3: The VSA ensures that volunteers are informed of the need for relevant medical and travel insurance whether organised by the volunteer or the VSA.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Example of written information provided for volunteers stating that medical insurance is compulsory for volunteer placements;				
	Written information for volunteers about the VSA's policy on travel insurance, including the need for emergency evacuation cover;				
	Outline of referral system to relevant service providers.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

Principle 8, Indicator 4: The VSA requests a certificate of fitness to travel and references from all volunteers.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copies of procedures for getting certificates of fitness;				
	Copies of procedures for seeking references;				
	Copies of volunteer medical certificates and references.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1.					
2.					
3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
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List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1.					
2.					
3.					

Minimum Standard 11

Principle 8, Indicator 5: There are comprehensive protection guidelines and disciplinary procedures in place for inappropriate behaviour of staff, volunteers and other representatives vis-à-vis contact with children/vulnerable adults.

**In
Place**

**Partially
in Place**

**Not in
Place**

Details of Evidence Available

Possible Evidence

Copies of policies relating to child/vulnerable adult protection and corresponding disciplinary procedures;

Protection policy providing evidence that children/vulnerable adults are adequately supervised and protected at all times;

Copies of protection guidelines signed by staff, volunteers and representatives;

Discipline & Grievance policy which includes clearly outlined consequences for breaching guidelines;

Document stating step-by-step guidance on what action to take if there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare;

Distribution list showing how protection guidelines are disseminated to volunteers and local partners.

Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List progress made in this area since 2012:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Principle 8, Indicator 6: The VSA has representatives with special responsibilities for protecting children/vulnerable adults.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copy of name and duties of those people with special responsibility for child/vulnerable adult protection in the organisation;				
	CVs, certificates, qualifications, etc., showing that personnel with special responsibilities for protecting children are provided with comprehensive training on handling complaints and implementing disciplinary procedures;				
	Lists of contacts for specialist advice, information, and reporting on child/vulnerable adult protection.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

Principle 8, Indicator 7: The VSA engages with local partners on child and vulnerable adult protection issues to ensure common agreements, mutual learning and development of good practice.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Documentation showing the VSA and local partners have a partnership agreement in place addressing the protection of children/vulnerable adults;				
	Copy of local partner's relevant child/vulnerable adult protection policy;				
	Documentation showing that the VSA has provided assistance to local partners in developing child/vulnerable adult protection where none are in place.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

9. Provide debriefing for returned volunteers.

Rationale:

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

Training and Other Resources:

- Comhlámh's Moving Forward days, Coming Home Weekends and Group Debriefings. We also provide support and guidance to organise counselling and personal debriefing;
- Kimmage Capacity Development Services (formerly DTALK) course: 'Learn to debrief humanitarian workers effectively';
- People in Aid information notes: 'Effective Debriefing'.

Minimum Standard 12

Principle 9, Indicator 1: The VSA ensures that all volunteers have access to personal and/or group debriefing and operational debriefings at the end of their placement.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copy of the VSA's guidelines on operational debriefing;				
	Copy of the VSA's guidelines on personal and/or group debriefing;				
	List of persons responsible for providing debriefing (internal and/or external);				
	List of debriefing schedule and activities shared with volunteers (in emails, information pack, volunteer manual, etc.).				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

Principle 9, Indicator 2: The VSA ensures that relevant staff receive training in debriefing or reorientation, or that debriefing is sourced externally.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	List of staff who have participated in training on debriefing and reorientation;				
	List of the VSA's external contacts that provide debriefing or reorientation for returned volunteers;				
	Copy of procedures for providing referrals for counselling.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

10. Undertake ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Rationale:

Monitoring and evaluation are an important means of measuring the effectiveness of any programme that feed into programme improvements and organisational learning.

Training and Other Resources:

- Kimmage Capacity Development Services (formerly DTALK) courses 'Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation', 'Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation', and 'Evidence Based Planning—Demonstrating Needs and Results';
- Volunteering England: Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit;
- www.serviceleader.org is a site that contains resources for volunteer managers including 'Measuring the Difference Volunteers Make: Guide to Outcome Evaluation for Volunteer Programme Managers'.

Minimum Standard 13

Principle 10, Indicator 1: Feedback from monitoring and evaluation processes is used to inform annual planning and programme revision.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copy of the VSA's monitoring and evaluation procedures of the volunteer programme;				
	Documentation showing that preparation, training, and induction programmes are regularly reviewed by the VSA;				
	Examples of how feedback from local partners has impacted on programme design and annual planning;				
	Examples of how feedback from volunteers has impacted on programme design and annual planning.				
<p>Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List progress made in this area since 2012:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					

Principle 10, Indicator 2: Local partners participate in the evaluation of volunteer programmes and placements.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Feedback from local partners on the structure of the volunteer programmes;				
	Feedback from local partners on the volunteers' role, profile and placement;				
	Feedback from local partners on the volunteer sending agency;				
	Minutes from meetings with local partners discussing volunteer management;				
	Minutes from meetings with local partners discussing volunteer activities;				
	Evaluation forms or other notes from local partners relating to the monitoring of volunteer placements.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1.					
2.					
3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1.					
2.					
3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1.					
2.					
3.					

Principle 10, Indicator 3: The VSA undertakes regular monitoring and evaluation of volunteer's experiences in programmes.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Copy of monitoring and evaluation forms or other methodologies used to capture volunteers' experiences;				
	Minutes from operational debriefings (with respect to data protection and confidentiality);				
	Minutes from group and personal debriefings (with respect to data protection and confidentiality).				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

Principle 10, Indicator 4: The VSA evaluates the volunteer programme to ensure that volunteer role, profiles and placements remain appropriate, useful and achievable.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Documentation that demonstrates the VSA has reviewed the structure of the volunteer programme;				
	Documentation that demonstrates the VSA has reviewed the role, profile and placement of the volunteer;				
	Documentation that demonstrates the VSA has reviewed the volunteer programme with the local partner;				
	Documentation that demonstrates the VSA has reviewed the management of volunteers;				
	Documentation that demonstrates the VSA has reviewed volunteer activities;				
	Copies of agreements/MOUs between VSA and local partners relating to volunteer placements;				
	Documentation that note the changes that have taken place from review of volunteer programme.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1.					
2.					
3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1.					
2.					
3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1.					
2.					
3.					

Principle 10, Indicator 5: All incidents, complaints and allegations of abuse recorded during the year inform planning in the following year.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Planning documents exemplifying how recorded incidents are incorporated into revised programme plans;				
	Planning documents exemplifying how recorded complaints are incorporated into revised programme plans;				
	Planning documents exemplifying how recorded allegations are incorporated into revised programme plans.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
1. 2. 3.					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
1. 2. 3.					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
1. 2. 3.					

11. Provide recognition to volunteers for their contribution to development whilst overseas and give them information on how they can further contribute to development at home.

Rationale:

Volunteers should be recognised, both formally and informally, as being of value and importance. Furthermore, many returned volunteers believe that it is at home they can begin to really make a difference in challenging the poverty and injustice they witnessed overseas. VSAs play a key role in both channelling volunteers' experiences and learning back home and supporting them to find opportunities to stay engaged in justice and development issues in Ireland.

Training and Other Resources:

- Volunteering Ireland course 'Motivating Volunteers';
- '101 ways to recognise your volunteers' is available at www.volunteerfingal.ie;
- Ireland Involved Awards: These awards include a category for International Development and are awarded on an annual basis;
- World Volunteer Web: Ideas for recognising volunteers;
- For ideas and resources for staying engaged in development, see 'What Next? A Course for Returned Volunteers' and the 'What Next? A Practical Guide to Continuing Development work from Ireland'. Visit www.comhlahm.org for these resources or contact grainne@comhlahm.org.

Minimum Standard 14

Principle 11, Indicator 1: The VSA provides volunteers with information on how they can further contribute to development/justice issues from home.

In Place

Partially in Place

Not in Place

Details of Evidence Available

Possible Evidence

Copy of procedures for signposting returnees to opportunities to stay engaged in development/justice issues from home.

List of opportunities, trainings, courses, etc. to which returnees have been signposted;

Tracking sheet showing the number of returnees who stay involved in local or global development –related issues.

Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List progress made in this area since 2012:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Principle 11, Indicator 2: The VSA recognises volunteers' contributions.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Photos, records of attendance, etc. from recognition ceremonies that are held for volunteers.				
	Newsletter, archived website information, etc. acknowledging the contribution volunteers have made while overseas.				
Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
List progress made in this area since 2012:					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					

Minimum Standard 15

Principle 11, Indicator 3: The VSA provides volunteers with a certificate, statement of service, or a reference letter upon request.		In Place	Partially in Place	Not in Place	Details of Evidence Available
Possible Evidence	Sample certificates;				
	Sample statement of service;				
	Sample reference letter.				
<p>Other evidence to show that indicator is in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List progress made in this area since 2012:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					
<p>List action points to be prioritised in 2014. State who will work on the task and timeline for completion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 					

Self-Audit Signature Page

Please sign and return the self-audit signature page to the Volunteer Quality Project Officer, Comhlámh, 2nd Floor Ballast House, Aston Quay, Dublin 2. Please note that the full self-audit should also be emailed to shannette@comhlamh.org.

We confirm that the 2013 version of the Code of Good Practice self-audit has been filled out accurately and is a true reflection of the level of implementation of the principles and indicators within our organisation.

Self-Auditor's Signature:

Date:

Director/Board Member's Signature:

Date:

Self-Audit Checklist

- Read Introduction and Guidelines (Part 1)
- Filled out the Volunteer Sending Agency Information 2013 charts (Pages 13 and 14)
- Filled out all cells in the 41 Indicator Tables (Part 2, pages 15 – 66)
- Email an electronic copy of the completed self-audit to (shannette@comhlamh.org)
- Email or posted evidence to Shannette if the VSA meets ALL 15 minimum standards
- Send a signed copy of this declaration sheet to the Comhlámh offices (Comhlámh, 2nd Floor Ballast House, Aston Quay, Dublin 2) to the attention of Shannette Budhai.

Glossary

Capacity Building Grant: A grant of up to €1,000 is available to organisations that have undergone an external audit. It is administered by Comhlámh on behalf of Irish Aid. An organisation applying for this grant must complete a short grant application form outlining how they intend to use the funds and provide details on how it will impact on the organisations ability to achieve their developmental goals with measureable and sustainable results.

Continuous Engagement: This term refers to what returned volunteers go on to do once they are home from an international placement. This could include involvement with their volunteer sending agency or local organisations. Alternatively, volunteers may choose to participate in development education activities such as courses, action projects, awareness raising, lobbying, etc. Other avenues of engagement can be integrated by bringing a global justice perspective into one's lifestyle, for example, through the consumer choices we make, the conversations we have, or through integrating a global dimension into one's area of work/study. Continuous engagement is an ongoing and lifelong process. There is no right time for volunteers to get engaged and the breadth of what returnees get involved with is specific to their own time, interests and needs. However, the kinds of information a volunteer sending agency provides to volunteers can impact on meaningful, long-lasting engagement which can be beneficial to the volunteer, the volunteer sending agency and wider society.

Corporate Volunteering: engaging for-profit sector employees in volunteering for a non-profit organisation or charitable cause. Many companies are committing their human and financial resources to local initiatives as they are increasingly aware of the benefits of engaging in corporate social responsibility activities. Such benefits may include forging stronger links with local communities, delivering on shared values and publically engaging in ethical conduct.

Debriefing: A process conducted by a volunteer sending agency or an external body asking how the experience of volunteering overseas was for the individual. Questions such as 'What was the best/worst part of your experience?' and 'How is the readjustment process going?' are generally asked. A debriefing aims to help the returned volunteer integrate their experience into their life as a whole, perceive their volunteer experience more meaningfully, and bring a sense of closure.

A personal debriefing is different from an operational debriefing in that the former is a person-centred approach that assists the volunteer to readjust to being at home whereas the latter asks for information about the work performed and what was achieved. Operational debriefings look at what was done well, what could have been done better and what changes should be made.

Volunteer sending agencies stand to benefit from providing both forms of debriefing. Principle 9, 'Provide debriefing to returned volunteers' is focused on providing a *personal debriefing* as opposed to an operational debriefing.

Desk-based review: This procedure, similar to an external audit, is carried out by a consultant external to Comhlámh. The consultant reviews the policies and practices of the VSA in an attempt to gauge the extent to which the CoGP is being implemented. Special attention is given to the implementation of the minimum standards. The consultant will make concrete recommendations to the VSA, providing feedback on how to improve programme practices. This process is available to signatories who have previously been externally audited. Signatories are encouraged to engage in the desk-based review within a three-year cycle. Unlike the external audit, there is no grant associated with this process.

Diaspora Volunteering: engaging immigrants or individuals who have a familial tie or heritage in another country in a volunteering programme to their country (or region) of origin. Engaging volunteers from diaspora communities enables a VSA to draw on the individual's specific skills, knowledge, and interests of that country whilst making financial and professional contributions to their communities 'back home'. This may include drawing on their own contacts, and developing programmes ideas.

Evidence: Under each indicator chart is a list of 'possible evidence'. The possible evidence listed here are suggestion as to what an organisation *could* have in place to support the indicator being in place; it is not required that these suggested forms of evidence be put in place as each programme is unique and not all of the suggestions would suit every organisation.

Forms of evidence can include a formal documents (such as a manual, a policy, written guidelines, outlined procedures, Memoranda of Understanding, Terms of Reference); correspondences (such as emails, written letters, evaluation forms, feedback forms), structured information (such as tracking sheets, budget sheets, databases); submitted information (such as CVs, proposals, invoices), or any other form of tangible documentation which supports that the stated indicator is being met.

External Audit: This procedure—carried out by a consultant external to Comhlámh—is primarily open to any organisation that is a new signatory to the Code of Good Practice. The consultant meets with VSA staff on their premises (or other available space) to review the policies and practices of the VSA in an attempt to gauge the extent to which the CoGP is being implemented. Special attention is given to the implementation of the minimum standards. The consultant will make concrete recommendations to the VSA and provide verbal and written feedback on how to improve programme practices. Following on from the external audit, a VSA is eligible to apply for a Capacity Building Grant (see definition).

Guidelines: A rule or instruction that shows or tells how something should be done. A guideline is a statement by which to determine a course of action. They aim to streamline particular processes according to a set routine or sound practice. By definition, following a guideline is never mandatory. Guidelines are not binding, are not enforced, and have a degree of flexibility in the way that they are administered.

Host Community: This is a general concept that encompasses all of the people who inhabit a defined geographical entity, ranging from a continent, a country, a region, a town, village or historic site. Members of the host community have responsibilities that include governing the place and can be regarded as those who have or continue to define its particular cultural identity, lifestyle and diversity. They contribute to the conservation or its heritage and interact with visitors. (ICOMOS, ICTC, 2002). For the purposes of completing the self-audit, the host community can be understood as the local people international volunteers and staff work and live with while undertaking their overseas placements. This could include local residents and beneficiaries of the volunteer project.

Host Partner: The organisation, community group, or formal body in the destination country that receive volunteers and staff. Host partners often provide some degree of direction and support to the volunteer on the activities in which they are engaged.

Indicator: Indicators within the self-audit can be understood as statements that elaborate upon the core values and aims articulated by the principle. Essentially, indicators are a subset of a principle and gauge the degree to which the principle is being integrated within the volunteer sending agency's organisational framework. There are 41 indicators which cover 11 principles within the 2013 version of the Code of Good Practice; of the 41 indicators, 15 of them have been identified as minimum standards.

Minimum standard: Of the 41 indicators listed in the 2013 version of the Code of Good Practice, 15 of them are deemed minimum standards. These minimum standards (or these 15 indicators) have been identified as the basic and essential structures that should be in place for any volunteer programme. If an organisation meets all fifteen minimum standards, they will be formally recognised for doing so in 2014.

North-South Volunteering: This is the predominant form of international volunteering where volunteers from the Global North go to the Global South. North-South Volunteering has come under criticism as it is seen as perpetuating a hegemonic power dynamic and underscores the notion that skills and capacity originate from northern countries.

Peer Support Meeting: This is a Code of Good Practice network meeting that is held twice annually. Signatories to the CoGP are required to attend one of the two meetings. Some key aims of the meeting are to: enable VSAs to network with one another, share sector and CoGP related information with attendees, and to provide the VSAs with an opportunity to set the agenda.

Policy: 1. A definite course or method of action which is adopted by an organisation or individual to guide and determine present and future decisions and which is developed in light of given conditions and alternatives; 2. A high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures of an organisation.

Principle: 1. A fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour or for a chain of reasoning. 2a. A rule or standard, especially of good behaviour; 2b. The collectivity of moral or ethical standards or judgments.

The Principles within the Code of Good Practice were identified over a two-year period in a collaborative process with returned volunteers, a wide variety of volunteer sending agencies, and with Comhlámh.

Reciprocal Volunteering: This form of volunteering allows volunteers from developing countries to volunteer in developed countries and vice versa.

It is widely recognised that in North-South Volunteering, volunteers from the Global North are privileged in having the valuable opportunity to: experience different ways of living that deepen their understanding of global inequity and power dynamics, improve language skills, grow personally and professionally, and work in meaningful cross-cultural collaborations. In North-South exchanges much of the aforementioned benefits are experienced by the northern volunteer. Reciprocal volunteering aims to rectify this imbalance by offering placements to volunteers and partners from the Global South in the Global North and vice versa. In doing so, benefits are conferred laterally.

Self-Audit: This is the process of looking at ones organisation in order to systematically assess the degree to which the Code of Good Practice and the eleven articulated principles are being implemented. The process requires self-assessors to seek information within the organisation and from key stake holders (such as local partners and volunteers) to determine the level to which good practices have been developed and mainstreamed throughout the agency. It enables the organisation to understand where they are developmentally at in a given point-in-time, assess what resources are available and identifies areas that require additional capital, and provides a framework outlining key aspects of a volunteer programme.

South-South Volunteering: this model provides volunteering opportunities for people in the Global South to volunteer in other countries in the Global South. This approach recognises that skills are not only located in the North and that volunteers from developing countries have valid knowledge to share contributions to make. South-to-South volunteering challenges the traditional power relations in international volunteering and offers opportunities for learning amongst developing nations which traditional modes do not (VOSESA 2013: 53).

Volunteer: One who freely renders a service or takes part in an enterprise. International volunteering in development includes both long-term and short-term placements which can be organised by both governmental and non-governmental agencies. There are many different kinds of volunteering which include:

Comhlámh

Established in 1975, Comhlámh is a dynamic, independent membership organisation working together with development workers, volunteers and activists. Comhlámh is committed to advocating for a just and equitable world, setting standards and promoting good practice. Through awareness raising, research, education and training we empower individuals to take effective action to address global inequality.

As the Irish Association of Development Workers and Volunteers we protect the interests of people working in development and for human rights. Our work is informed by their experiences.

Comhlámh promotes responsible, responsive volunteering for global development. We monitor and support the implementation of the Comhlámh Code of Good Practice among Irish Volunteer Sending Organisations. In addition, we provide comprehensive information, training and support to volunteers and development workers before their overseas placements and when they return home.

Contact Details:

Comhlámh
12 Parliament Street
Dublin 2
Ireland

Phone: +35314783490
Email: info@volunteeringoptions.org
Website: www.comhlamh.org



This Code has been developed with funding from Irish Aid. The views expressed herein are those of Comhlámh and can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of Irish Aid.