



NEW EVIDENCE ON OVERSEAS VOLUNTEERING FROM IRELAND AND ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT IN IRELAND

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Acknowledgements & Disclaimer

Acknowledgements

PMCA Economic Consulting would like to thank the following people for their help and assistance in the preparation of this report: Fleachta Phelan, Dervla King, Ruth Doggett, Siobhan Sleeman and Johnny Sheehan; Sharon Prado of University College Dublin, who provided helpful comments on the survey questionnaire and draft report; and to all the volunteer sending agencies who kindly took the time to complete the survey questionnaire underpinning the new empirical evidence in this report. PMCA would also like to thank Professor Benjamin Lough, Megan Haddock and Chelsea Newhouse of Johns Hopkins University and Amanda Moore McBride of Washington University in St. Louis for helpful information regarding research on the economic role of volunteering. Thanks are also due to Karena Cronin and Helene Perold of VOSESA for their support and to Con Costello of troyteq who produced the map of the Irish Aid Priority Countries (Figure 3.5, p. 23).

Disclaimer

This report is the sole responsibility of PMCA Economic Consulting. By virtue of preparing the report or otherwise in connection with this study, PMCA will not assume any responsibility or have any liability to any third parties.

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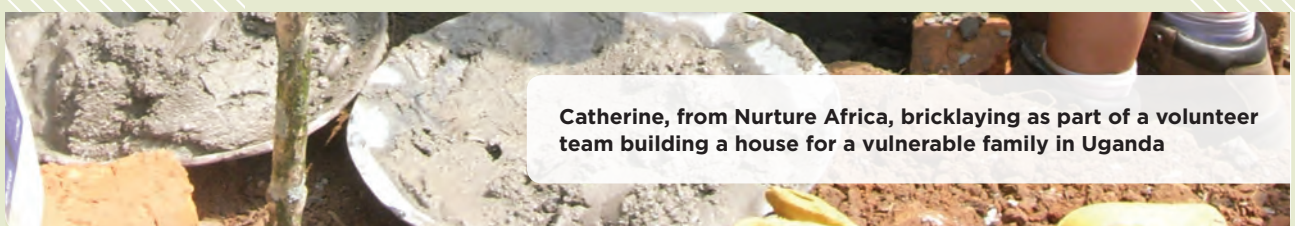
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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Billion** A thousand million or 1,000,000,000 or 10⁹.
- CAO** Central Applications Office.
- CIA** Central Intelligence Agency.
- CSO** Central Statistics Office.
- DAC** Development Assistance Committee. Ireland is a member.
- DCU** Dublin City University.
- EC** European Commission.
- EU** European Union.
- EU15** The fifteen Member States of the European Union (EU) prior to the accession of the New Member States 12 (NMS12): Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (UK)
- EU27** The twenty-seven Member States of the EU or the sum of the EU15 and NMS12 (Before Croatia's accession on July 1st 2013).
- Eurofound** European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- GDP** Gross domestic product. The internationally accepted measure of a country's national income.
- GNI** Gross national income or the sum of a country's personal consumption, investment, government expenditure and gross exports (i.e. a country's gross earnings).
- HEA** Higher Education Authority.
- HEI** Higher education institution.
- ILO** International Labour Organization.
- IMF** International Monetary Fund.
- INNS** Irish National Student Survey.
- JHU** Johns Hopkins University.
- MDGs** Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations (UN): (1) eradicate extreme hunger and poverty; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empowering women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development.
- Micro organisation/enterprise** Term used in business/management to refer to enterprises or organisations more generally employing fewer than 10 people.
- Million (m)** 1,000,000
- NCCPE** National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement.
- nec** Not elsewhere classified.
- NFQ** National Framework of Qualifications.
- NGO** Non-governmental organisation.
- NI** Northern Ireland.
- NMS12** 12 New Member States of the European Union (EU) (before Croatia's accession on July 1st) of the European Union (EU): Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- ODA** Overseas development Assistance.
- OECD** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- PMCA** PMCA Economic Consulting.
- SIF** Strategic Innovation Fund.
- SQLS** Second Quality of Life Survey (2007) - used in the Eurofound study of 2011 on participation in volunteering in Europe.
- Trillion** A million million or 1,000,000,000,000
- UN** United Nations.
- US** United States (of America).
- VSA** Volunteer sending agency.



Executive Summary



Catherine, from Nurture Africa, bricklaying as part of a volunteer team building a house for a vulnerable family in Uganda



Introduction

This report has been prepared for Comhlámh by Dr. Pat McCloughan, Managing Director of PMCA Economic Consulting. It presents extensive new survey evidence from Irish-based volunteer sending agencies (VSAs) on international volunteering from Ireland and assesses the socio-economic impact in Ireland of international volunteering for development from Ireland to overseas locations.

It is hoped by Comhlámh that this survey will mark the beginning of systematic information gathering exercises that will help to improve understanding of the overseas volunteering sector and its socio-economic contribution, thereby helping to strengthen the sector in the coming years. The study is concerned with the contribution of overseas volunteering in the sending or home country of the volunteers (i.e. Ireland) and does not seek to assess or evaluate the socio-economic impact in host countries. Proposals for future areas of research are outlined below and in the main body of the report.

The findings of the study are based on an online survey that was issued to 78 VSAs and completed during January-February 2013. The survey drew an appreciably large response rate, averaging 46% across all questions, which exceeded expectations and is large for studies such as this. The high response rate is especially striking and encouraging given that most VSAs are small organisations, with a minimal staff complement and thus a low capacity to take the time to record and collate such detailed statistical information, and we are grateful for their support in this regard.

The survey results demonstrate a significant interest in and support for international volunteering across Irish society, continuing even in a time of unprecedented economic difficulty. They set out the many positive impacts which international volunteering can have in Ireland, from economic value, to skills acquirement, social capital and intercultural learning. It is heartening to see that the level of support and concern about global poverty and inequality, and the desire to do something to contribute towards addressing these, are still strikingly strong in Ireland, in spite of our own current economic challenges.

In total, the VSAs surveyed placed 2,120 volunteers in positions overseas in 2012. The profile of volunteers emerging from the study suggests that they are:

- Evenly divided between females and males;
- Of higher than average educational attainment;
- Generally either employed (44%) or students (40%); and
- Aged between 18 and 30 (50%) or 30 and 65 years (48%).

A large majority (92%) volunteered overseas for up to 3 months, with just over 70% of these spending up to one month in a placement abroad.

Additionally, the survey yields information that helps to establish a detailed overview of VSAs. They operate overwhelmingly (95%) on a not-for-profit basis, with many working towards the achievement of one or more of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals, as well as a range of other development-related objectives. The majority (65%) have been established since the start of the 2000s. Coupled with the fact that their most common funding sources are fundraising events and donations from the public, followed by State funding disbursed through Irish Aid, this suggests that support for their work remains strong despite the economic recession. This is also borne out by the high number of applications for placements they received in 2012, which totalled almost 3,800.

According to the findings, overseas volunteering placements are akin to full-time jobs in terms of the hours worked by volunteers: the majority of VSAs said that their volunteers contributed between 30 and 49 hours a week while on their placements. When this is considered alongside the information gained about volunteers' occupational backgrounds, the average duration of placements, and other available economic data, it is possible to estimate that the activities of overseas volunteers contributed the equivalent of almost €10 million, or 0.01% of Irish GDP, in 2012. Furthermore, the survey results enable us to estimate that between 411 and 481 jobs are sustained in the Irish economy, either directly or indirectly, through the work of VSAs. Finally, the study highlights how international volunteering assists with the acquisition of life-time skills, which will ultimately result in longer-term, dynamic socio-economic impacts.

Limitations of the Study

Almost certainly, any attempt to estimate the socio-economic contribution of overseas volunteering will result in underestimation because the skills acquired or developed during placements abroad are longer-term or dynamic benefits and will tend to be realised in home countries like Ireland over time. In addition to the skills or human capital dimension of overseas volunteering, other social benefits include contributing to civil society at home (there is evidence that overseas volunteering can encourage domestic volunteering) and to global justice, as well as helping to sustain support for overseas assistance into the future.

Overseas volunteering can also contribute to international social capital, which relates to enhancing the connection between peoples from different countries and stages of socio-economic development. Establishing these wider benefits represents a challenge for studies such as this one and the study sets out some proposals for Comhlámh to consider in respect of garnering further evidence from volunteers, and employers, about these longer-term human capital benefits from international volunteering.

The report also provides a (non-exhaustive) review of relevant research on overseas volunteering and its socio-economic contribution (Section 2). A challenge, or perhaps more accurately an opportunity, arising from the research review is the provision of greater empirical evidence to document the socio-economic impacts of overseas volunteering in home countries. Sending countries like Ireland benefit as well as host countries from the process, but the benefits to the former tend to receive less attention, not because they are insignificant but rather because people and policymakers at home tend to see the recipient

countries as the principal beneficiaries. However, the partnership approach underlying the concept of international social capital invites us to also consider the benefits for home or sending countries. It is envisaged that the evidence presented in this report will put Irish-based VSAs in a better position to articulate the effects that their work has for those who fund them, including the many thousands of residents and businesses who generously support them each year.

An important caveat is to note that, as the survey was conducted among VSAs, rather than individual volunteers, there may be bias in some of the views expressed by the respondents, including those in respect of skills acquired or enhanced by volunteers as a result of overseas placements. Nonetheless, our interest in this matter rests with the relative rankings stated by VSAs in regard to skills acquired/enhanced whilst abroad – that is, those skills to which overseas placements add most value, according to VSAs.

About Irish-Based Volunteer Sending Agencies (VSAs)

The new survey evidence about VSAs in Ireland indicates the following results:

- The vast majority (95%) are not-for-profit organisations;
- An appreciable proportion (65%) were founded or established in Ireland since 2000, pointing to a dynamic sector responsive to demand at home and overseas;
- The most common general objectives identified by Irish-based VSAs include those relating to the achievement of the UN's Millennium Development Goals and development education, as well as a wide variety of other goals, including, for example, cultural/arts exchange and support for credit union development;
- The most common category of overseas volunteering programme which VSAs in Ireland undertake is 'individual volunteering', which covers a large range of activities;
- The vast majority of VSAs (approximately 90%) are micro organisations with fewer than 10 paid or salaried staff and almost 30% have no staff at all (i.e. single owner/manager organisations);
- The two most common sources of funding for VSAs in Ireland are fund-raising events (dinners, golf meetings etc.) and donations from members of the public/businesses, illustrating the strong level of support and generosity shown by Irish people and businesses towards assisting overseas development (in addition to State support);
- Almost half (46%) of all overseas placements from Ireland in 2012 were in Africa, with 22% in Asia and the Middle East and 16% each in Latin America and other parts of the world;
- The nine priority Irish Aid Partner Countries are well-covered by Irish-based VSAs in terms of host countries in which overseas volunteers spent placements during 2012;
- There is a significant interest in overseas volunteering in Ireland, with almost 3,800 applications received by 40 VSAs in 2012, or an average of 95 applications per VSA;
- Further illustration of the level of interest in volunteering abroad is given by the survey result that the aforementioned number of applications exceeded the number of overseas volunteers that VSAs in total aspired to recruit in 2012 (2,202).



EIL Volunteer Abroad participants say a temporary goodbye to life in Ireland, following their pre-departure preparation workshop.

Profile of Overseas Volunteers

We have learned the following from the new survey evidence:

- In 2012, the number of male and female volunteers was approximately the same – of the 2,120 volunteers in the sample, 1,056 (49.8%) were male and 1,064 (50.2%) were female;
- However, although there is interest in overseas volunteering as indicated by the number of applicants, volunteering numbers (2,120) were lower than the number of volunteers that VSAs in total aspired to recruit in 2012 (namely 2,202), suggesting that fewer than the planned number of volunteers are being recruited (see below for possible reasons for this);
- Half of the overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012 were aged under 30 years and almost half again were aged between 30 and 65 years, while very few were aged 66 years and over;
- In terms of nationality, the vast majority (85%) of volunteers in 2012 were Irish;
- Dublin and the rest of Leinster together accounted for 61% of overseas volunteers in 2012, followed by Munster (18%), Connaught (14%) and Ulster (7%) – in comparison with the general population of Ireland, the proportion of volunteers residing in Dublin is high (35% versus 28%) and low in Munster (18% versus 27%);
- The vast majority of overseas placements are of short duration – 70% were for less than one month and 22% for 1-3 months in 2012, echoing previous Comhlámh research showing a preference for shorter placements among overseas volunteers from Ireland.

There are many possible explanations for the finding that the number of volunteers recruited was less than the number that VSAs (in total) planned to recruit in 2012. These include, for example, applicants changing their mind because they got a job at home or are proceeding to further studies, or emigrating. Another possible reason relates to matching volunteers to specific needs overseas (remembering the apparent demand among applicants for placements of short duration). This raises a more general question about the specificity of skills sought in particular cases, with one VSA saying that candidates from other countries tend to have more of the specific skills required in certain situations. Given the preference in Ireland for short placements of less than one month and the emphasis on individual volunteering, we do not consider that this is a significant issue but nevertheless it is one that could be considered (qualitatively) by Comhlámh in its next study, inter alia.

Further Profile Data and the Socio-Economic Contribution of Overseas Volunteers

The evaluation of the socio-economic contribution of overseas volunteers is in two parts, the first comprising further profiling evidence relating to socio-economic impacts and the second assessing the economic and social significance of the survey results.

In regard to the survey evidence on socio-economic contribution, it is found that:

- Overseas volunteering is akin to a full-time job during the time committed, with over 70% of VSAs estimating that their volunteers worked between 30 and 49 hours per week during their placements abroad in 2012;
- Overseas volunteers were active in a large and diverse range of specific activities during their placements abroad in 2012; the most popular of which were building and construction, community development and children/youth development – illustrating the practical nature of placements in many cases and, as shown below, many volunteers tend to be active in areas outside of their normal areas of work and expertise (e.g. house building in South Africa);
- Employed people made up 44% of all overseas volunteers in 2012, the highest category by employment status;
- Students constituted 40% of all volunteers in 2012 and people out of work made up 7%;
- In terms of specific occupational background, as distinct from employment status, as well as students, people working in education and in human health and social work constituted many of the overseas volunteers in 2012;
- When the evidence on occupational background is compared with the results on activities, it is learned that many of the overseas volunteers who are employed at home in Ireland are active in areas outside of their normal work, reflecting the short-term and flexible nature of overseas volunteering from Ireland and that many people volunteering abroad do so, apparently, to gain new experiences and skills;
- Appreciably more volunteers have had experience of volunteering at home compared with having no such experience (62% vs 38%), echoing the positive relationship between domestic and overseas volunteering reported in previous research;

- Possessing a bachelor degree is the most common highest level of educational attainment among overseas volunteers (42%), followed by upper post-primary level or its equivalent (Leaving Certificate) (23%) – reflecting the large student base among volunteers active abroad;
- Echoing previous research showing that volunteering (domestic and overseas) is generally associated with higher levels of educational attainment, it is found that 51.2% of overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012 possessed a third-level qualification (compared with 24.3% of the general population possessing a third-level degree or higher according to Census 2011);
- In other words, compared with the general population, overseas volunteers typically have higher levels of educational attainment – a finding also true of volunteers generally;
- Given the short-term nature of overseas volunteering from Ireland, and the fact that many of the volunteers are active in areas outside of their normal areas of work/competencies, it is not surprising to find that practical, transferable skills like team-working and problem-solving are strongly enhanced, while skills like campaigning/advocacy and foreign language learning are less strongly enhanced by such volunteer placements, according to the views expressed by VSAs.

From the survey sample, it is estimated that there were in the region of 4,500 overseas volunteers in total from Ireland working in various placements around the world in 2012. Taking account of the distribution of overseas volunteers by occupation and the average duration of overseas placements (both also from the new survey evidence) plus other available economic data on average annual earnings and the employment rate in Ireland, it is estimated that the activities of the overseas volunteers contributed the equivalent of about €10m or 0.01% of Irish GDP in 2012. This estimate is consistent with previous estimates of the economic contribution of overseas volunteering conducted by researchers at Johns Hopkins University and elsewhere.

It is also estimated that each person employed directly in the VSA sector in Ireland helps to sustain a total of between 1.37 and 1.60 jobs (i.e. knock-on and direct employment). For example, VSAs require various services, such as IT, financial services and catering. Also, the interest in educational activities, and the high level of students undertaking short volunteer placements revealed in our survey, most likely helps to support higher education institutions in providing third-level courses of relevance to international development and global justice issues (which have been growing in recent years).

The 300 people estimated to work directly in the VSA sector in Ireland suggests that about 111-181 additional jobs are supported through the work of VSAs in Ireland or a total of 411-481 jobs are sustained in the Irish economy through the work of VSAs.

Given the lifetime skills acquired and enhanced through overseas volunteering, and the large number of full-time students involved at any given time, the longer-term, dynamic socio-economic impacts will almost certainly exceed the short-term, static impacts (as estimated here by reference to GDP and jobs impacts). As well as contributing to civil society and international social capital, when the longer-term skills dimension is considered, it may be said that overseas volunteering contributes to the human capital qualities underpinning productivity, innovation and sustainable socio-economic growth.



Participants taking part in a workshop following Comhlámh's AGM.

Concluding Remarks and Future Research Possibilities

This study has sought to add value and new insights to the work which Comhlámh undertakes promoting best practice in international volunteering, and to VSAs in considering, researching and documenting the contribution and impact of overseas volunteers from Ireland to local and global society and economy.

As well as providing extensive new primary research information about VSAs and their volunteers, it is also found that overseas volunteering exerts a positive socio-economic impact in Ireland, even though the sector is small in absolute terms. The sector is practically-oriented and generally successful in matching volunteers to activities abroad on a predominantly short-term and flexible basis: one of the salient conclusions of the research is that many volunteers are active in areas outside of their normal sphere of work, which is positive economically, socially and culturally.

Next year and beyond, it is recommended that Comhlámh conducts a similar survey of VSAs that would seek to capture the following quantitative data on international volunteers (not necessarily limited to):

- Number of applicants during the year;
- Number of volunteers recruited by categories (gender, age, place of residence in Ireland, duration of placement, occupational background, higher educational attainment etc.);
- Reasons for any differences between the number of recruited volunteers and volunteers that VSAs planned to recruit during the year (which would be 2013).

Over time, the goal would be to use the annual survey results to construct time series data on overseas volunteering, which would provide a rich and dynamic source of information on the sector and enable further analysis of international volunteering from Ireland in the context of wider economic and societal changes.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report has been prepared for Comhlámh by Dr. Pat McCloughan, Managing Director of PMCA Economic Consulting (PMCA). It provides detailed new survey evidence on international volunteering from Ireland and provides independent assessment of the socio-economic impact in Ireland of international volunteering for development from Ireland to overseas locations.

The terms of reference for the study were to:

- Research and advise Comhlámh on a suitable methodology and produce a survey questionnaire for capturing data on international volunteering activity from Ireland, its economic value and social return on investment;
- Agree criteria with Comhlámh for targeting of international volunteering agencies sending volunteers annually to ensure consistency of approach and sample;
- Analyse the information contained in the questionnaire, following data collection;
- Analyse data to assess the economic value of international volunteering for development from Ireland in 2012;
- Produce relevant statistics on the overall nature of international volunteering activity from Ireland in 2012;
- Detail the social return on investment from the volunteering activity.

1.2 Background to the Study

Comhlámh is the Irish Association of Volunteers and Development Workers. Its mission is to foster good practice and critical engagement in volunteering and action for development. It does this by: promoting and supporting good practice standards via the 'Comhlámh Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Agencies'; providing information, training and supports to volunteers; producing research and influencing policy; and empowering volunteers to engage in action for development in and from Ireland.

As part of its remit, Comhlámh wishes to produce annual statistics on international volunteering to address an identified gap in understanding of international volunteering from Ireland - namely its socio-economic impact in the sending or home country (Ireland). Capturing new data and statistics on this important aspect of overseas volunteering will facilitate both Comhlámh and Irish-based volunteer sending agencies (VSAs) to inform the broader development sector and help ensure wider recognition of its socio-economic impact in Ireland.

In principle, overseas volunteering is generally an activity in which volunteers acquire and/or enhance certain key skills, like team-working and problem-solving, and is therefore an activity benefiting the volunteers as well as the recipients. The skills from participation in overseas volunteering are transferable through people's careers and lives. As with domestic volunteering, overseas volunteering can be regarded as an investment (in skills) with

external benefits to society (in the home and host countries) as well as to the volunteers (a 'win-win' situation).

This study is partly an examination of this investment using the new survey evidence generated and our primary interest is in the socio-economic contribution facilitated by overseas volunteering in the home country (i.e. in this case, Ireland).

1.3 Methodology

Outline of Approach

The principal requirement of the study was to obtain new primary research data on overseas volunteering from Ireland and this has been fulfilled with extensive new survey evidence from Irish-based VSAs.

The particulars of the approach entailed first reviewing existing evidence on international volunteering to inform the online survey questionnaire. Dr. McCloughan liaised closely with Comhlámh in designing the questionnaire, which was also informed by reference to a sample of application forms to become an overseas volunteer (to get an indication of the types of data compiled by VSAs). As a further input into the development of the online survey questionnaire, it was agreed to 'road-test' it by issuing the draft questionnaire on a pilot basis to a small number of VSAs (before eventually going 'live' to all VSAs). The questionnaire was adjusted according to VSA feedback, and finalised by Dr. McCloughan and Comhlámh at the beginning of 2013. A copy of the final survey questionnaire (containing 26 questions) is given in the Annex to this report.

The online survey was issued by Comhlámh to 78 VSAs on 8 January 2013 and closed on 12 February 2013. Given the detailed and extensive nature of the survey, 3-4 weeks were allocated to allow the VSAs to respond to the survey. Of the 78 VSAs to which the survey questionnaire was issued, 38 (49%) were signatories to Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice in respect of overseas volunteering. By including both signatories and non-signatories in the survey, the aim was to be as inclusive as possible whilst also maximising the sample. During the survey period, VSAs were given the opportunity to send any queries on the survey to Comhlámh or Dr. McCloughan.

By the time the survey was closed, 46 VSAs responded to or considered the survey. While this suggests a response rate of almost 60%, the largest number of respondents by question was 42 (54%). Different numbers of VSAs responded to different questions and a breakdown of the number of responses per question is given in Table A1 at the end of the report. Across all questions, the average number of responses was 36, implying an average response rate of 46%, which is large for studies like this one.

Features of the Approach to Bear in Mind

The design of the survey questionnaire had regard to the International Labour Organization Manual (ILO Manual) on the measurement of volunteer work (developed in association with the Center for Civil Society Studies at Johns Hopkins University, JHU).¹ This is intended

¹ The ILO Manual is available online at http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/WCMS_100574/lang--en/index.htm. See also Salamon, L. M., Sokolowski, S. W. and Haddock, M. A. 'Measuring the Economic Value of Volunteer Work Globally: Concepts, Estimates, and a Roadmap to the Future', *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, Vol. 82(3), pp. 217-52, 2011.

as a guide to generating systematic and comparable data on volunteer work via regular supplements to labour/household surveys.²

The approach in this study has been to survey VSAs, who are in the best position to provide data on the numbers of overseas volunteers and their activities. The new survey results presented in this report relate to 2012 and include information on VSAs' views regarding the range of skills acquired or enhanced by volunteers from their overseas placements and the challenges confronting the sector. Given that the survey was carried out among VSAs, rather than volunteers, care should be exercised in interpreting the views expressed in relation to some of the questions. VSAs, as respondents, are in the business of volunteer recruitment and placement, and therefore may have a tendency to emphasise the positives associated with overseas volunteering. Furthermore, the results from a survey conducted among VSAs are only as good as the information management systems in place in VSAs, which in Ireland are generally small (micro) organisations (employing fewer than 10 people) and working with limited resources. Inevitably, there will be an element of error, as well as some bias, in surveys such as that under consideration in this report (but the same can also be said of all survey data).

The extensive survey questionnaire sought detailed quantitative data from VSAs and both Dr. McCloughan and Comhlámh were pleasantly surprised at the high response rates to the questions (particularly as it is not a requirement for VSAs to maintain the sorts of data requested). The only instances in which the response rate fell below 40% were in relation to two questions, namely the number of overseas volunteers by place of residence on the island of Ireland (Question 16, 34% response rate) and the number of overseas volunteers by highest level of educational attainment (Question 23, response rate of 31%).

1.4 Structure of the Report

The rest of the report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a review of relevant research on overseas volunteering and looks at existing evidence on the economic and social impacts of this form of volunteering;
- The four sections following that present the new survey research evidence on overseas volunteering from Ireland, in which;
 - o Section 3 gives the results about Irish-based VSAs
 - o Section 4 profiles overseas volunteers (by gender, age etc.)
 - o Section 5 assesses the socio-economic contribution of overseas volunteers (by reference to further profiling data on average hours per week committed etc., wage rates for different sectors and skills enhanced or acquired during placements abroad etc.)
 - o Section 6 considers issues affecting overseas volunteering from Ireland; before
- Section 7 concludes the report and gives some pointers for similar exercises that Comhlámh may conduct later this year and beyond.

² According to the Center for Civil Society Studies at JHU, the following countries produce regular surveys of volunteering: Australia; Canada; New Zealand; Norway; Switzerland; and the US.

2. Review of Relevant Research on Overseas Volunteering

2.1 Introduction

As a prelude to the new survey results on overseas volunteering from Ireland presented in the following sections of the report, it is instructive to first consider what is known about overseas volunteering from existing research, including its socio-economic impacts. The research review provided here does not seek to be an exhaustive or definitive account of the literature; rather the purpose is to distil some key lessons from earlier studies in the context of the aims of this study. We begin with an account of the literature on general volunteering (all forms) before proceeding to the research on overseas volunteering.

A large amount of academic research and policy studies have been carried out into the extent and determinants of volunteering. Thus we have a good understanding of the overall incidence of volunteering across countries and the factors underpinning people's decision to participate in volunteering (which is generally defined as an activity that someone performs, entirely at their own will, for other people or for a community without any expectation of monetary reward or any other direct return). It is fair to say that we also have a good overall sense from the research of the economic impact of volunteering and the skills to which it contributes.

However, beyond aggregate information on volunteering generally, relatively little is known about volunteering in specific areas – including overseas volunteering. For example, whilst we can now easily compare the overall incidence of volunteering in Ireland with that in other European Union (EU) countries, there is no similar or corresponding repository of statistical information showing how the overseas volunteering rate varies across countries. The intention of international initiatives like the aforementioned ILO Manual is to address this gap in our knowledge of volunteering – by providing a set of standardised guidelines in respect of the systematic collection of data (by official statistics agencies like the Central Statistics Office, CSO, in Ireland) – and the goal of this study is to enhance knowledge and understanding of the overseas volunteering sector in Ireland.

2.2 Lessons from Previous Studies

Volunteering Generally (Domestic and International)

A recent study on participation in volunteering and unpaid work in the EU27 by McCloughan et al. (2011) for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) found that approximately one-fifth of Europeans (slightly above 20%) participate in voluntary and charitable activities, which translates into roughly 100 million people living in the EU being involved in volunteering at any given time to a greater

or lesser extent (volunteering every day, several times per week, once or twice a week or less often than once per week).³

This finding is consistent with the earlier GHK study of 2010, which reported that between 92 and 94 million people aged over 15 years are involved in voluntary activities in the EU, implying an aggregate European volunteering rate of about 22%.⁴ In the US, by comparison, the aggregate volunteering rate in 2010 was 26.3% or almost 63 million residents devoting 8.1 billion hours of service in that year.⁵

However, within the EU27, there is significant variation in the rate of volunteering across Member States. McCloughan et al. (2011) found that the highest rates of participation are in Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Austria and The Netherlands, where over 40% of those aged 18 years and above participate in volunteering. In Greece, Malta, Portugal and Spain and the newest Member States – Bulgaria and Romania – the participation rate averages between 10% and 15%. The participation rate in the EU15 exceeds that in the 12 New Member States (NMS12), suggesting that volunteering is more common in the EU15.⁶

The overall rate of participation in volunteering in Ireland found in the Eurofound study is just under 20%, slightly lower than the EU27 average (remembering that the study by McCloughan et al. (2011) was based on the Second Quality of Life Survey (SQLS) carried out by Eurofound in 2007 and therefore that the rates for Ireland and other EU Member States may have changed since that time). The corresponding rate for the UK is higher at over 30%. The SQLS data (2007) do not provide data for Northern Ireland (NI) or the other parts of the UK; however research data from the 'It's All About Time' study (2007) and other sources suggest an aggregate volunteering rate for NI of about 20%, suggesting that the incidence of volunteering is about the same in the two parts of the island of Ireland.⁷

According to the Eurofound study carried out by McCloughan et al. (2011), the key determinants of a person's decision to participate in volunteering are:

- Age – the relationship between one's age and frequency of participation in volunteering is non-linear, meaning that the frequency of participation first rises with age to peak at 45-50 years and then falls as people get older (over 50 years);
- Gender – males are more likely to participate more frequently than females;
- General health – people in good general health are more likely to volunteer frequently;
- Educational attainment – those with a higher level of educational attainment, such as third-level qualifications, are more likely to volunteer frequently;
- Life satisfaction – people reporting to be satisfied with their lives are more likely to volunteer frequently; and

3 McCloughan, P., Batt, W., Costine, M. and Scully, D., Second European Quality of Life Survey: Participation in volunteering and unpaid work, study commissioned by Eurofound, Dublin, 2011. The study is available at <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2011/02/en/1/EF1102EN.pdf>.

4 GHK, Volunteering in the European Union, study commissioned by the Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (EAC-EA) and the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) of the European Commission, Brussels, 2010.

5 Volunteering in America (<http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/national>).

6 The NMS12 are: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in 2007, the other 10 joined in 2004). The EU15 are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (UK).

7 Further information on volunteering in NI can be found by visiting the Volunteer Now website (www.volunteernow.co.uk). Volunteer Ireland is the Irish equivalent (www.volunteer.ie).



- Country effects – people resident in the Nordic countries, Austria and The Netherlands participate most frequently in volunteering, whereas people in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Spain participate less frequently in volunteering.

Some of these findings are readily explained intuitively. For example, the single biggest activity in which volunteering occurs in Europe is sport and this helps to account for the age and gender effects, where middle-aged fathers tend to contribute actively to their children's participation in such activities. Women tend to be more involved in caring for children and home activities, giving them less time to allocate to volunteering (in other words, volunteering is a form of unpaid work that tends to be negatively correlated with other forms of unpaid work, such as caring or housework).

The educational attainment effect is also interesting and lends support to the view that there is a two-way relationship between volunteering and educational attainment: volunteering tends to support a person's appreciation of education and skills as well as contributing to these through the acquisition of leadership and inter-personal skills. On the other hand, people with strong educational attainment often engage in volunteering to complement their academic and professional qualifications and extend their social and professional networks.

In economic terms, volunteering is seen as adding to human and social capital, making for a more cohesive and productive society (other things being equal). In the same way, international volunteering is seen as adding to international social capital, which is influenced by numerous factors.⁸

However, frequency of participation is not the only way of examining the extent and determinants of volunteering; also relevant is the time given to volunteering. An important finding of the Eurofound study is that the measurement of volunteering matters. In particular, McCloughan et al. (2011) report that people residing in European countries with relatively low frequencies of participation nevertheless tend to devote longer periods of time when they do participate (e.g. Bulgaria and Romania).

For those participating in volunteering, the average hours per week spent on voluntary activities is found to be 6.5 in the EU15 and NMS12 (even though the frequency of participation in the latter group of countries was found to be noticeably lower than in the former group).

According to the Eurofound study (2011), people with high educational attainment (at least post-secondary level) devote on average 1.5-1.7 hours more per week to volunteering compared with those with lower educational attainment; males devote on average about 1 hour more per week than females to volunteering; and, while life satisfaction exerts a significantly positive influence on the frequency of participation in voluntary activities, it has no statistically significant impact in respect of average hours per week on volunteering, illustrating the difference between frequency of participation and average time spent on volunteering per week or month.

The Eurofound study also provides results on the characteristics of people reporting "too little" time on voluntary work or political activities (the pre-defined activity specified by Eurofound in its SQLS of 2007, which, it is noted, is not equivalent to voluntary and charitable activities specified in the other relevant questions in that survey). According to the analysis of the SQLS conducted for Eurofound by McCloughan et al. (2011), the reasons for people reporting too little time on voluntary work or political activities are:

⁸ For further discussion on social capital please see the companion piece to this research, written by VOSESA.

- Low educational attainment;
- Employed or self-employed;
- Gender – more likely to be women; and
- Looking after family/children – more likely to be part of a household consisting of a couple plus children.

In other words, as might be expected intuitively, people who are busy at work or who have family/home/caring commitments (generally women) are people who would possibly like to devote more time to volunteering, if they had the time.

In terms of the economic impact of volunteering, estimates in previous studies differ, depending on the data and methodologies used. Estimates reviewed by JHU and by GHK suggest that volunteering generally contributes up to 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) (but estimates put the value of overseas volunteering at a much lower percentage, as we shall see below). According to *Volunteering in America*, the (dollar) value of volunteering in the US was about \$173 billion, using the 2010 Independent Sector valuation of \$21.36 per hour.⁹ In that year, data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) shows that GDP in the US (current prices) was \$14.5 trillion, implying that the estimated \$173 billion accounted for 1.2% of US GDP in that year. International data on the shares of GDP for volunteering generally and overseas volunteering in particular are given below.

GHK (2010) and other bodies, including the European Volunteer Centre, report an upward trend in the number of volunteers in the EU, suggesting in turn that the economic impact of volunteering may be increasing. The reasons given for the increasing trend in volunteering (in the EU) include:

- Increased awareness of social and environmental issues;
- Recent public initiatives to promote volunteering;
- Increasing numbers of voluntary organisations (which applies to VSAs in Ireland as the new survey evidence reveals);
- Increasing numbers of individuals involved in project-based or short-term volunteering (short-term volunteering is shown to be a notable feature of the new survey results presented in this study);
- Increased involvement of older people in volunteering, whose life expectancy has increased with higher living standards.

To these, PMCA would add in particular growing recognition of the benefits to people from participating in volunteering, such as work and social skills, which benefit people personally as well as professionally.¹⁰

Box 2.1 below considers active ageing and volunteering, and some initiatives in this regard on the island of Ireland (2012 was the European Year of Active Ageing). A research question examined later in this study concerns the extent to which older people are involved in overseas volunteering from Ireland.

At the other end of the age spectrum, November 2012 saw the launch of the ‘Take Charge for Change’ declaration, an initiative supported by the Irish President Michael D. Higgins. The proposals of the declaration include beginning a campaign by young people to promote

9 *Supra* footnote 5. The ‘Independent Sector’ is the term used to describe the leadership network for non-profits, foundations and corporate-giving programs committed to advancing the common good in America and around the world.

10 However, it is observed that the volunteering rate has fallen in the US, from almost 29% in 2003 to the aforementioned 26.3% in 2010 (*supra* footnote 5).

active citizenship and providing CAO (Central Applications Office) points recognition for volunteering. See Box 2.2 (p. 8) on initiatives to develop volunteering and active citizenship among third-level students in Ireland.



EIL volunteer Sara McMurray poses with her class in a farming area in South East Rajasthan, India.

Box 2.1: Volunteering and Active Ageing

2012 was the European Year of Active Ageing and it is now well-established that people are living longer in economically developed countries. According to PMCA analysis of Eurostat data, in 2015, the proportion of people aged 65 years and over in Ireland will be 13%, compared with 19% for the EU27. By 2040, the projected proportions will be 20% for Ireland and 27% for the EU27.

On the island of Ireland, a number of major research initiatives are underway which address active ageing and volunteering.

In the North, longitudinal research commissioned by Volunteer Now and funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies seeks to examine the relationship between volunteering and health in the 50+ age group in NI and the study is due to be completed in 2013. In the South, TILDA (The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing) was launched in 2006 and involves following a cohort of over 8,000 people aged over 50 years over a 10-year period. The study is being led by a team of researchers at Trinity College Dublin and is partly funded under The Atlantic Philanthropies. According to findings to date from this study, 20% of people aged 65-74 years engage in voluntary work at least once a week; participation in volunteering is greatest among older people with high levels of educational attainment (echoing other research, including Eurofound 2011); there is no significant gender difference between older volunteers (which may reflect that they have more time on their hands); and, perhaps most interestingly, a lower quality of life is associated with older people who never volunteer, which is consistent with the general research finding that volunteering is associated with higher levels of subjective wellbeing and/or quality of life, in which there may be a two-way relationship with volunteering (i.e. both cause and effect).

Source: PMCA review and analysis of various materials.

Box 2.2: Volunteering Engagement by Third-Level Students in Ireland

Campus Engage is a network for the promotion of civic engagement and volunteering in Irish higher education. It is funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA). The Hunt Report (January 2011) includes provision for higher education institutions (HEIs) to engage with and proactively respond to their communities. That report and others, including the Report of the Enterprise Strategy Group (2004), highlight the importance of knowledge, skills and their development to socio-economic development – areas where it is increasingly recognised that volunteering can contribute. The Irish National Student Survey (INSS), which is being carried out by the HEA and HEIs, includes civic engagement as a key element.

For many years, Irish HEIs have been actively involved in supporting volunteering and community engagement, but largely in informal ways. There is now provision for putting this important aspect of the work of HEIs on a more systematic footing, including greater data capture to inform analysis of the extent of civic engagement by students and further funding needs.

The importance of evidence in articulating the contribution made by HEIs to civic engagement was emphasised by Mr. Paul Manners, Director of the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), which is based in Bristol and was established in 2008 as part of the £9.2m Beacons for Public Engagement initiative in the UK. Speaking at a short conference hosted by Dublin City University (DCU) on 14 December 2012 (as part of Campus Engage), Mr. Manners said that, without capturing information, HEIs cannot hope to properly portray the role and impact of volunteering and active engagement and the message of its importance risks getting lost, with potential consequences in terms of funding.

Dr. Sharon Prado, University College Dublin (UCD), in her presentation at the same conference, underscored the need for data management. She outlined UCD's development of an online tool with which to collect more granular information about student volunteering over time to help enhance understanding of volunteering and its contribution to society.

Source: PMCA review of various materials, including the 'Actioning Engagement Conference' at the Helix at Dublin City University (DCU) attended by Dr. McCloughan on 14 December 2012.

Overseas Volunteering

Previous Comhlámh Data on Overseas Volunteering from Ireland

During 2011, Comhlámh undertook an (informal, non-scientific) internal data assembly exercise regarding VSAs in Ireland to inform understanding of the sector and its future development. Data were compiled with the cooperation of 40 VSAs and the results provide a profile and insights into the sector, which are built upon by the new results presented later in this report.

According to Comhlámh's exercise in 2011, there were 3,021 overseas volunteers from Ireland in that year, of which 1,710 (56.6%) were female and 1,311 (43.4%) were male. Thus, in contrast to volunteering generally, the Comhlámh sample of 2011 suggested that overseas volunteering is an activity in which females predominate.

Comhlámh also found that VSAs aspired to recruit 8,125 volunteers, suggesting a gap between the actual number of overseas volunteers and the targeted number of volunteers or possibly difficulty in recruiting overseas volunteers. (This is something we explore further as part of the current survey reported subsequently in this study.)

The other findings from the Comhlámh exercise in 2011 are summarised as follows:

- The average cost incurred by individual overseas volunteers was €1,875;



- The majority of overseas volunteers were aged between 18 and 30 years (55%), although an appreciably large proportion were aged between 41 and 65 years (23%), with over 10% aged between 51 and 65 years;
- On the other hand, relatively few overseas volunteers (1%) were aged 66+ years;
- The most frequent placements offered by VSAs were of relatively short duration, namely 0-2 weeks, 3-4 weeks and 2-3 months, whereas a minority (less than 20% of VSAs) offered placements of 1-2 years' duration and 2+ years;
- A majority of VSAs recruited for a specific skill (54.1%) and a very high proportion of volunteers (92%) were found to have had prior experience working in development overseas.

Previous Research on the Economic and Social Impacts of Overseas Volunteering

Economic Impact

Previous estimates of the economic value of overseas volunteering suggest that it contributes approximately 0.01-0.05% of GDP. The studies are mostly North American and apply to the US economy. Central to the methodologies used in these studies is (inter alia) the estimate from the Independent Sector¹¹ that overseas volunteering accounts for about 1% of all volunteering hours.

The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project has estimated that US domestic volunteering accounts for approximately 2.18% of US GDP. This figure is derived from the number of volunteer hours and the wage at which these hours are valued, averaged over data gathered from 1995 to 2000 by JHU. Using this estimation, a total dollar amount was computed based on the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimate of GDP in the US for 2006 (purchasing power parity), namely \$12.98 trillion (CIA, 2007). Multiplying the US GDP by 2.18%, the estimated value of domestic volunteering was \$282.96 billion in 2006. Using the Independent Sector's updated approximation that 1% of volunteer time is dedicated to international service, the total dollar figure representing volunteer time abroad was estimated at \$2.83 billion, equating to 0.02% of US GDP.

Other US research by the Hudson Institute, the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis and the Corporation of National and Community Service report similar estimates of the economic value of overseas volunteering. Like the JHU study, the estimates are driven by the estimate from the Independent Sector in the US that the percentage of all volunteer time spent abroad is 1%.¹²

More recently, the organisation Volunteer in America¹³ estimated that in 2010 the 62.8 million nationwide volunteers contributed a total of 8.1 billion hours of service (equating to 129 hours per volunteer in that year or 2.5 hours per week per volunteer on average). Using the Independent Sector's estimate that volunteering contributes \$21.36 per hour to the

¹¹ *Supra* footnote 9 on the definition of the Independent Sector.

¹² See also Lough, B., McBride, A. M. and M. S. Sherraden, 'The Estimated Economic Value of a US Volunteer Abroad', CSD Working Papers No. 07-29, Centre for Social Development, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, 2007. According to the Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances 2012, US residents contributed an estimated \$3.7 billion worth of volunteer time in 2010 to relief and development assistance overseas, or approximately 0.03% of US GDP in that year.

¹³ *Supra* footnote 5.

economy, the total hours volunteered translates into over \$173 billion, which was 1.2% of US GDP in 2010. Applying the 1% rule from the Independent Sector suggests that overseas volunteering from the US accounted for about 0.01% of US GDP in that year, which is a little lower than the previous estimates implied by JHU, the Hudson Institute, the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis and the Corporation of National and Community Service.

Previous estimates of the contribution made by overseas volunteering to GDP are shown in Table 2.1. They are based on the available estimates of the percentage shares of GDP by volunteering generally and use the Independent Sector estimate that 1% of all volunteering time is devoted to volunteering abroad. Note that the data (compiled by JHU) pertain to 1995-2002 (these are the latest available estimates for overseas volunteering at the time the research review for this study was carried out in December 2012).

Thus, countries such as The Netherlands and the Nordic countries, where the incidence of volunteering generally is found to be comparably high, have correspondingly high rates of overseas volunteering. In Ireland, the data compiled by JHU suggest that the value of volunteering is equivalent to 1.2% of GDP. This in turn suggests that the overseas volunteering sector contributes the equivalent of 0.012% of Irish GDP, which we may use to assess our estimate of the proportion of Irish GDP accounted for by overseas volunteering in 2012 from the survey results later in the report (in Section 5).

Table 2.1: Estimates of the Shares of GDP by Volunteering in Ireland and Other Countries

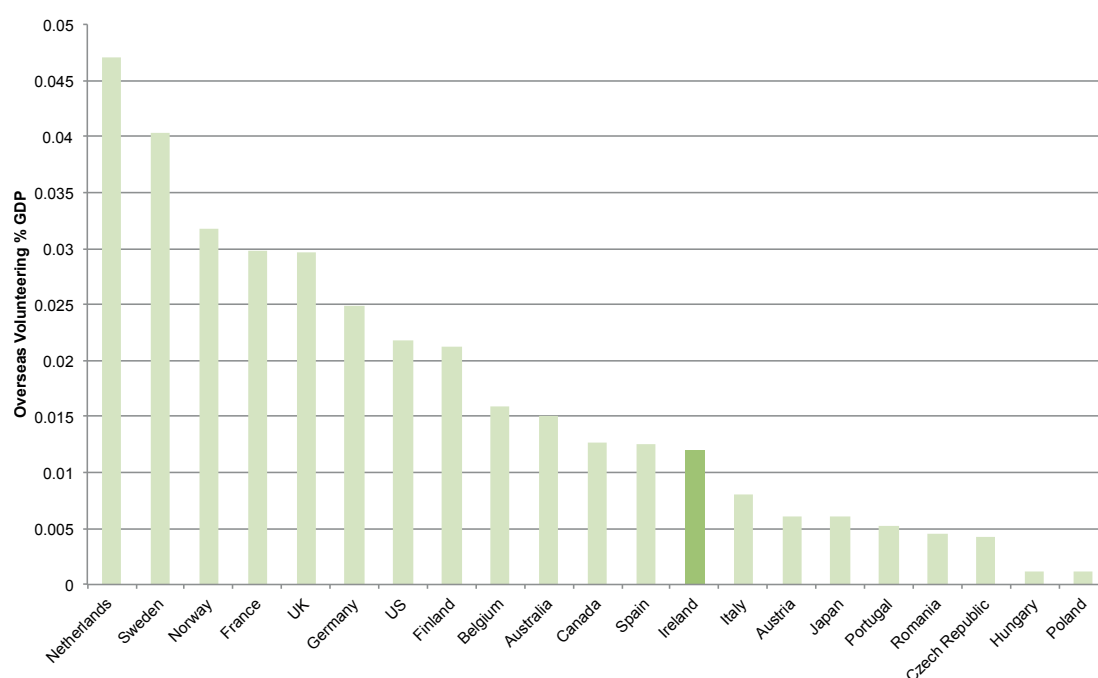
Country	Estimated % of GDP	
	All Volunteering	Overseas Volunteering
Netherlands	4.70	0.047
Sweden	4.03	0.040
Norway	3.18	0.032
France	2.98	0.030
UK	2.97	0.030
Germany	2.49	0.025
US	2.18	0.022
Finland	2.12	0.021
Belgium	1.59	0.016
Australia	1.51	0.015
Canada	1.26	0.013
Spain	1.25	0.013
Ireland	1.20	0.012
Italy	0.80	0.008
Austria	0.61	0.006
Japan	0.61	0.006
Portugal	0.53	0.005
Romania	0.45	0.005
Czech Republic	0.43	0.004
Hungary	0.12	0.001
Poland	0.11	0.001

Source: Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies, PMCA analysis in respect of overseas volunteering (through applying the Independent Sector estimate that 1% of time spent on volunteering is done so overseas).

Note: Studies incorporated into the Johns Hopkins data 1995-2002. The Johns Hopkins data on this and other aspects of volunteering across countries are available at http://ccss.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/10/Comparative-Data_2004_FINAL.pdf. Numbers subject to rounding.

The chart below graphically illustrates the distribution of countries in terms of the estimated percentage shares of GDP accounted for by overseas volunteering. While the graph, and the data presented in Table 2.1 above, are based on studies/data during 1995-2002 (latest available), it appears that the value of overseas volunteering relative to GDP is relatively low in Ireland. However, the ranking is driven by the scale of overall volunteering in the countries and therefore by the aggregate volunteering rate, which we know from other research is comparably low in Ireland – Eurofound (2011), etc.

Figure 2.1: Estimated Shares of GDP by Overseas Volunteering in Ireland and Other Countries



Source and Note: See Table 2.1.

Social Impact

The economic impact of overseas volunteering captured in Figure 2.1 above refers to the estimated share of GDP accounted for by overseas volunteers in a given year and so is a static measure of the economic contribution of overseas volunteering. Allowance also needs to be given to the social impact of overseas volunteering, which includes adding to skills and society more generally.

The research on social impact reviewed here shows that overseas volunteering equips and facilitates the enhancement of both ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ skills, which are transferable through one’s career, thereby having longer-term economic and social value.

Flanagan and Sadowski (2011) state that:¹⁴

“While the economic value of volunteering is immense, the social value of volunteer effort can be even greater. Across the whole of Europe volunteers are, on a daily basis, delivering change and tackling many problems that face today’s society. For many people, particularly those coming from disadvantaged groups,

¹⁴ Flanagan, T. and Sadowski, P. ‘Volonteuropa Reviews: The Value of Volunteering’, Volonteuropa, 2011.



volunteering can develop confidence and motivation to do something positive with their lives – including acquiring new skills, re-engaging with their community and often gaining employment”.

TA study by Machin (2008) sought to better understand the effect that international volunteers have when they return to the UK. The focus of the review was on the impact of overseas volunteering both on volunteers themselves and on their home communities when they come back from overseas placements.¹⁵

The dual impacts of overseas volunteering in the study are grouped under four themes:

- Developing professional and personal skills and knowledge;
- Influencing employment, career progression and workplace practices;
- Raising development awareness and promoting social cohesion; and
- Increasing civic participation.

In relation to developing personal and professional skills and knowledge, Machin (2008) noted the growing research evidence highlighting the positive impact of international volunteering on a range of such skills, including interpersonal skills, communication skills and management, problem-solving, leadership and team-working skills. However, Machin also observed that the research has tended to focus on the impact that overseas volunteering has on skills development in the education sector, and that less attention has been paid to the development of skills among international volunteers in certain other sectors (e.g. health) and the transferability of these skills when they return. She also observed that, although the link between overseas volunteering and personal/professional skills has been made anecdotally, less systematic evidence is available on the impact of returned volunteers on the development of skills and knowledge within their communities in the UK.

In respect of the second theme of influencing employment, career progression and workplace practices, Machin (2008) observed that this is a developing area. For example, research with returned teaching volunteers has highlighted the ways in which international volunteers in the education sector can develop new approaches to teaching, learning and classroom management, which can be put into practice when they return to their schools in the UK. This in turn can aid career progression and employment prospects among returned volunteers. International volunteering can also help to inform career decisions, particularly among young people, by giving them experience of different roles and activities. Machin found in her review that the extent to which the skills and experiences of returned international volunteers are recognised by employers is, however, variable, potentially limiting the extent to which the positive impacts are realised by returned volunteers. The perspectives and attitudes of employers towards international volunteering placements, and the best ways of supporting returned volunteers in their workplaces so that they can apply the learning from their placement experience, are both areas worthy of future research attention, according to Machin’s study.

Regarding the theme of raising development awareness and promoting social cohesion, Machin (2008) observed that the development of international outlooks and of better understanding of development issues are identified as important areas of change arising from

15 Machin, J. 'The Impact of K: A Scoping Review', Institute for Volunteering Research study commissioned by VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas), 2008.

international volunteering experiences. She also noted from her review of the research that international volunteering can facilitate a stronger sense of 'global citizenship' and 'solidarity'; it can lead to greater awareness and understanding of development issues, poverty and diversity. Beyond individual volunteers, Machin noted that the research suggests that the experiences and perspectives that returned international volunteers bring back to the UK can make a difference to wider attitudes within home communities. She also highlighted a suggestion in the research that there are limits to the extent to which returned international volunteers are able to transfer their knowledge and perspectives, as they may face resistance or indifference.

Turning to increasing civic participation, Machin (2008) noted that international volunteering can increase levels of participation in volunteers' home communities in the UK. Reports from returned volunteers suggest that many feel the international volunteering experience encouraged them to become more involved in their local, home communities through volunteering and other forms of civic participation. In addition, returned volunteers may go on to encourage others within their home communities to get involved through volunteering.

Among the recommendations of Machin's (2008) study are the following proposals:

- Undertake additional independent and rigorous research to help demonstrate and enhance the impact of international volunteering on volunteers, workplaces, service users and the wider community, thereby supporting developments in policy and practice;
- Individual agencies (VSAs) should review the ways in which they collect, analyse and present evidence from returned volunteers about the impact of their volunteering experiences – this could significantly help organisations to demonstrate better the impact of international volunteering placements on volunteers themselves, overseas communities and back home (however, for the reasons stated earlier, VSAs might have a tendency to use such information selectively and there might therefore be some bias in this source of information);
- The VSA sector should consider the way it works with employers and with other stakeholders to promote the benefits of international volunteering experiences.

The latter finding in Machin's research (2008) echoes an apparent 'skills trap' highlighted in the study by Brook et al. (2007), namely the situation in which employers are not recognising the experience gained through overseas volunteering as a source of workplace skills facilitating productivity and economic progress.¹⁶ This lack of recognition may be the result of insufficient information rather than by design, and, if so, would suggest an important role for factual evidence on the socio-economic impact of overseas volunteering.

Brook et al. (2007) set out four recommendations for action:

- *Awareness-raising*, where the researchers state that;
"Volunteer sending agencies need to translate the experience and skills of international volunteering into the language of employability skills and professional work skills that is meaningful to employers and HR managers"
- *Corporate volunteer programs*, where they propose that;
"Employers should work with recognised international volunteer agencies to develop such programs. These agencies can identify a suitable overseas partner organisation and ensure that the program offers demonstrable benefits to the overseas community."

16 Brook, J., Missingham, B., Hocking, R. and Fifer, D. 'The Right Person for the Job: International Volunteering and the Australian Employment Market', Australian Volunteers International, 2007.

They can also help select and prepare candidates for the program”

- *Career enhancement strategies*, where the researchers suggest that;

“Returned volunteers have not been passive in building their careers, and have actively drawn upon their international experience and skills in pursuit of career goals. Their career paths, however, could be enhanced and accelerated with better resources and support...networking and assistance in communicating their experiences and skills”
- *Increase evidence base*, where Brook et al. conclude by saying that;

“This research data will be used as the basis for further studies into the skills gained by international volunteering and their relevance to the Australian employment market. A research project with the University of Sydney is currently underway to link the specific activities of volunteers on assignment with the skills they gain as a result...Detailed, qualitative case studies would also advance the case for employability skills through international volunteering. Such case studies would document work experience and learning processes in international development work, the skills and capabilities acquired and improved, and contributions and career trajectories upon return”.

Box 2.3: Social Return among Overseas Volunteers at SERVE

In January 2013, the VSA SERVE undertook an impact evaluation of its Development Education Programme. A questionnaire was sent to all past SERVE volunteers, and 60 past SERVE volunteers (almost 10% of all volunteers) responded. The gender breakdown was 57% female, 43% male.

The results show an average increase of 62% in volunteers’ awareness of the following development issues – disability, skills training and education, human rights, food insecurity and malnutrition, issues affecting women and HIV/AIDS.

In addition, 75% of respondents think critically about development issues, stating that the SERVE development education programme is the main reason for this. 91% of volunteers described the programme as either “beneficial” or “very beneficial”.

Source: The SERVE survey is available at: <http://www.serve.ie/storage/sdp-2012-15/The%20Impact%20of%20SERVE%27S%20Dev%20Ed%20Programmes%20V2.pdf>.

2.3 Summary

The (non-exhaustive) review of relevant research in this section indicates that the socio-economic impact of overseas volunteering on home countries (e.g. Ireland) is potentially significant. A challenge/opportunity apparent from the research review is the need for provision of greater evidence to document the socio-economic impact of overseas volunteering, so that VSAs are better-placed to articulate the benefits that their work has for those who fund them, including people and businesses residing in and based in their home countries.

3. About Volunteer Sending Agencies (VSAs) in Ireland

3.1 Introduction

We now present the results from the Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 concerning VSAs and their activities. The results are presented in tabular or graphical form and discussed in turn.

3.2 Survey Results

Organisational Form of VSAs

Table 3.1 shows that the vast majority of VSAs are not-for-profit organisations. Of the 41 VSAs who answered this question, 39 (or 95% of the total) chose the 'not-for-profit' category and the remaining 2 (5%) chose the 'for profit' option. Among the not-for-profit organisations in the sample are faith-based/religious organisations active in missionary work overseas.

Table 3.1: Organisational Form of Volunteer Sending Agencies

Organisational Form	No. VSAs	% VSAs
Not-for-profit	39	95%
Government-based	0	0%
For profit	2	5%
Total	41	100%

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 2.

Note: 41 VSAs answered this question and 5 skipped the question.

Year of Foundation or Establishment in Ireland of VSAs

The VSA sector in Ireland includes a number of organisations with a high profile or 'household name' status, as well as many other organisations whose names may not be as easily recognised. To get an indication of the extent of new entry into the sector, we asked VSAs to choose from a range of options in respect of the year of their foundation, allowing organisations to specify the year when they were first established in Ireland if part of an international group.

The results in Table 3.2 overleaf suggest a dynamic sector in which there was a flurry of new entry or establishment in the last decade – 23 or 55% of the 42 respondents to this question stated that they were founded or established in Ireland during the 2000s. Eight of the VSAs

(19%) were founded or established pre-1970s and 4 (10%) were founded/established in the current decade (i.e. since 2010).

The relatively large number of VSAs founded or established in the last decade may indicate that the sector is influenced in part by the economic cycle, because the ‘noughties’ was generally a decade of economic growth (despite the onset of the international economic crisis in the latter half of 2007).

Overall, what is noteworthy from the survey is that almost two-thirds of Irish VSAs were founded or established since 2000.

Table 3.2: Year of Foundation of Volunteer Sending Agencies

Year Founded/ Established in Ireland	No. VSAs	% VSAs
Pre-1970s	8	19%
1970s-1990s	7	17%
2000s	23	55%
Since 2010	4	10%
Total	42	100%

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 3.
Note: 42 VSAs answered this question and 4 skipped the question.

General Objectives of VSAs

VSAs based in Ireland are active in a variety of fields and we were keen to understand more about the extent of this diversity. Included among the range of options regarding the general objectives of VSAs specified in the survey were the eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), namely to:

- Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty;
- Achieve universal primary education;
- Promote gender equality and empowering women;
- Reduce child mortality;
- Improve maternal health;
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensure environmental sustainability;
- Develop a global partnership for development.

Since VSAs were able to choose one or more of the general objectives specified in the survey, the results illustrated in Figure 3.1 show the number of VSAs beside each option.

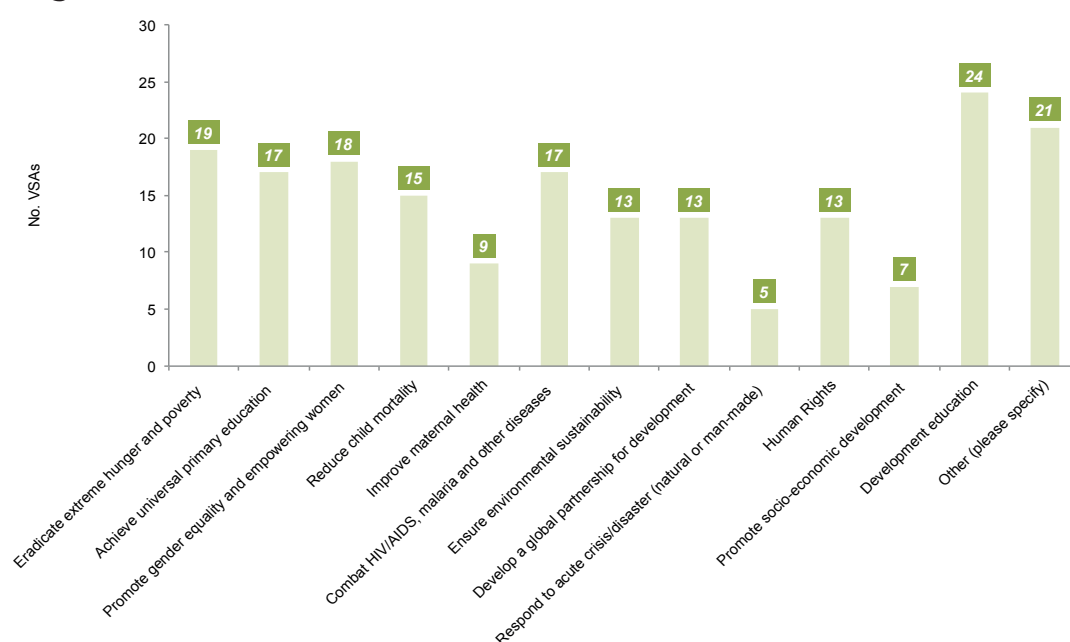
The wide diversity of VSAs’ general objectives is apparent from the chart and the average number of VSAs active across the eight MDGs is 15, which is the same as the average number of VSAs responding to all of the categories (including the ‘other’ option).¹⁷

The single most common objective identified by VSAs is ‘development education’ (24 out

17 GNI is the sum of a country’s personal consumption, investment, government expenditure and gross exports (i.e. a country’s gross earnings).

of the 42 respondents). Development education promotes critical reflection on the root causes of underdevelopment and encourages people's long-term, ongoing, involvement in addressing these; it makes an important contribution to creating and maintaining support for overseas development and it is perhaps noteworthy that no other developed country donates more, as a proportion of its gross national income (GNI), from private sources (residents and businesses) to the developing world than Ireland (see Box 3.1 below). However, this is a high sample of VSAs indicating development education as a core activity, and given that a relatively small number of VSAs are members of the Irish Development Education Association, it is probable that it covers both the organisations who prioritise formal education (e.g. teaching etc.) in their volunteer placements and activities, as well as those who engage in the more specific activity of development education.

Figure 3.1: Types of Volunteering Programme to which Volunteer Sending Agencies are Working



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 5.

Note: 41 VSAs answered this question and 5 skipped the question.

In addition, in response to our invitation to specify other general objectives, VSAs added a range of activities, including:

- Improving hospital services to patients;
- Cultural/arts exchange;
- Promotion of philanthropy;
- House building;
- Peace and international understanding;
- Support for credit union development;
- Global justice.

Box 3.1: The Generosity of Irish Residents towards the Developing World

Ireland has a long tradition of supporting development in some of the poorest parts of the world. As shown in the table below, Ireland is especially generous in respect of donations from private sources (people and businesses) and in fact no other developed country donates more in this regard, as a proportion of gross national income (GNI), than Ireland.

The international aid statistic with which most people or commentators tend to be familiar is Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). This refers to assistance from official or government sources to the developing world and represents the particular form of international assistance pertaining to the United Nations (UN) target of developed countries, like Ireland, giving at least 0.7% of GNI as ODA (net disbursements) (by 2015). Data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) show that, among the 23 largest aid donating countries in the world, which include Ireland, only a handful met the UN target of net ODA accounting for 0.7% of GNI in 2011 (the latest year for which figures are available from the OECD). Ireland achieved a ratio of 0.51% of (net) ODA to GNI in 2011, ahead of the average figure for all the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries, of which Ireland is a member, of 0.31%.

Nevertheless, when one looks deeper into the OECD international assistance data, it emerges that Ireland performs strongly in relation to 'Gross Outflow from Private Sources', which stems from money given by people and businesses in Ireland to the developing world (typically through NGOs). This particular international assistance flow is separate from ODA and there is no UN target attached to it.

As can be seen from the table below, Ireland has consistently out-performed the other DAC countries in regard to Gross Outflow from Private Sources during the past decade. Relative to GNI, no other DAC country has attained the same level as Ireland in this respect. The OECD figures also suggest that the generosity of the Irish people to assisting developing countries is independent of the economic cycle, with 0.22% of GNI donated by Irish people and businesses in 2011, which was higher than the 0.21% observed in 2007 (the peak of the economic cycle before the crash the following year

International Development Variable	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Gross National Income (GNI)										
DAC Total (USDm)	25,387,417	28,462,964	31,602,070	33,198,422	35,057,497	38,227,032	40,438,100	38,482,578	40,141,090	43,121,582
Ireland (USDm)	98,863	127,604	156,186	171,340	188,888	216,152	224,880	184,655	171,260	178,394
Official Development Assistance (ODA)										
DAC Total (USDm)	58,575	69,432	79,854	107,838	104,814	104,206	121,954	119,787	128,466	134,038
Ireland (USDm)	398	504	607	719	1,022	1,192	1,328	1,006	895	914
DAC Total (% GNI)	0.23%	0.24%	0.25%	0.32%	0.30%	0.27%	0.30%	0.31%	0.32%	0.31%
Ireland (% GNI)	0.40%	0.39%	0.39%	0.42%	0.54%	0.55%	0.59%	0.54%	0.52%	0.51%
Gross Outflow from Private Sources										
DAC Total (USDm)	10,105	11,760	13,372	16,559	16,743	20,482	26,241	24,186	32,341	31,951
Ireland (USDm)	134	357	329	438	439	450	450	300	300	400
DAC Total (% GNI)	0.04%	0.04%	0.04%	0.05%	0.05%	0.05%	0.06%	0.06%	0.08%	0.07%
Ireland (% GNI)	0.14%	0.28%	0.21%	0.26%	0.23%	0.21%	0.20%	0.16%	0.18%	0.22%

Further indication of Ireland's international position in supporting the developing world is provided by the Commitment to Development Index (CDI), published annually by the Center for Global Development. The CDI ranks the countries in the OECD's list of major donors on their commitment to policies that benefit people living in developing nations (independently of the OECD). It takes account of the quality as well as the quantity of aid and incorporates how donor countries design their aid as an important element of the index. In 2011, Ireland achieved a score of 8.6 in the aid component of the CDI, which was almost 50% higher than the average of all countries.

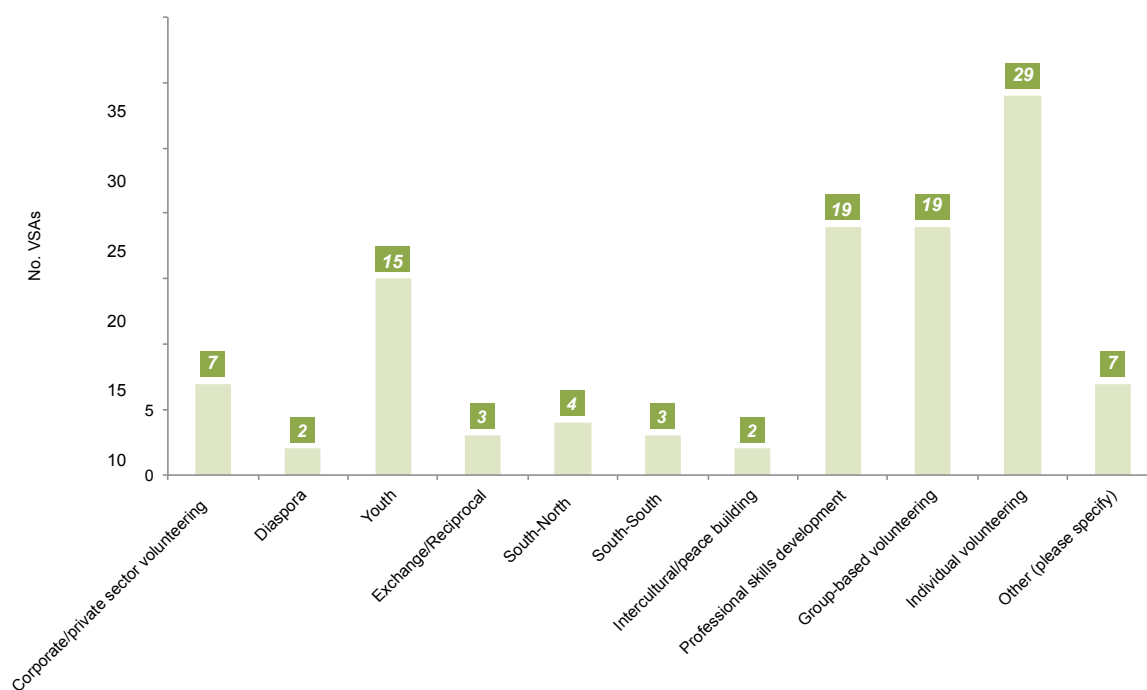
Yet further evidence of the generosity of Irish people towards the developing world is provided by the fact that Ireland attained a ranking of second place in the World Giving Index in 2011. This measure is compiled by the Charities Aid Foundation and illustrates the esteem in which NGOs are regarded in Ireland as they channel resources from Ireland to less developed parts of the world.

Source: OECD data, PMCA analysis.

Types of Overseas Volunteering Programme to which VSAs are Working

Figure 3.2 shows that the most common type of overseas volunteering programme operated by VSAs in Ireland is 'individual volunteering' (29 VSA responses), which covers a wide range of activities depending on host community needs and the skills and experience of the volunteers recruited. Matching volunteers to identified needs in overseas locations can sometimes be difficult for VSAs and this form of overseas volunteering programme allows for flexibility and utilisation of general skills.

Figure 3.2: Types of Volunteering Programme to which Volunteer Sending Agencies are Working



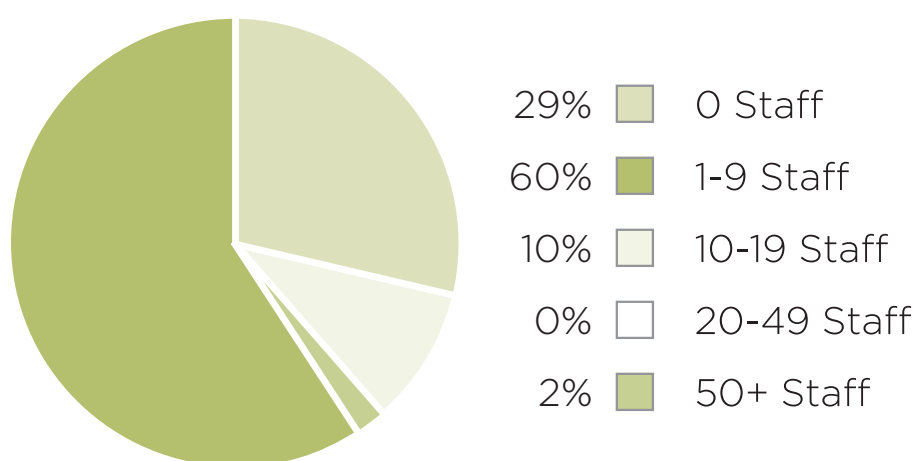
Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 5.

Note: 41 VSAs answered this question and 5 skipped the question.

Number of Paid/Salaried Staff at VSAs

Figure 3.3 below illustrates the size distribution of Irish-based VSAs in terms of the number of paid/salaried staff or employees (at the end of 2012). The vast majority (almost 90%) employ fewer than 10 staff, meaning that they are equivalent to 'micro organisations' (the smallest type of organisation by employment). Within this size category, it is observed that 29% of VSAs (or 12 of the 42 VSAs that responded to this question) employed no staff, meaning that the VSAs were run by a single person responsible for all activities. The pie-chart also shows that 10% of VSAs have between 10 and 19 staff and 2% with 50 or more staff.

Figure 3.3: Number of Paid/Salaried Staff at Volunteer Sending Agencies at the End of 2012



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 6.
Note: 42 VSAs answered this question and 4 skipped the question.

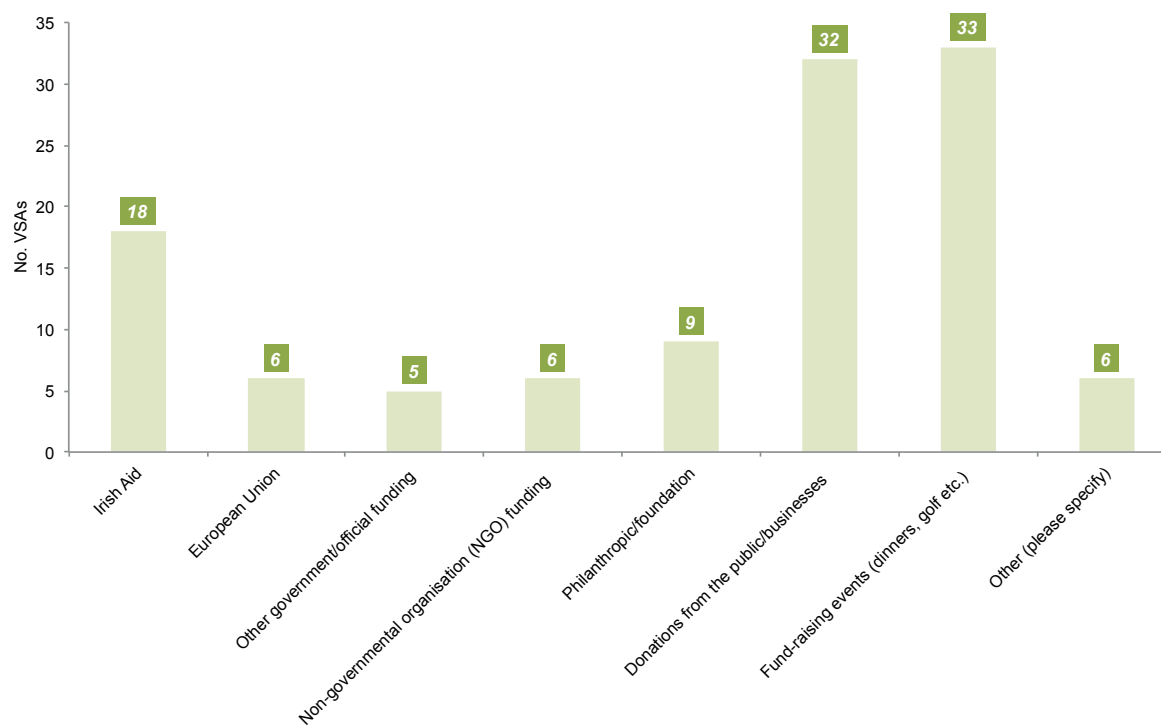
Using the information gained from the survey responses, it is possible to estimate the total number of people directly employed in the VSA sector in Ireland. Assuming that the 78 VSAs to which the survey was issued constitutes the 'universe' of all VSAs in Ireland (for the purpose of the estimation exercise), then using the percentage breakdown of staff in the pie-chart above we estimate approximately 300 people directly working or employed in the sector in Ireland.¹⁸ Please note that this estimate implicitly assumes that the non-respondents to the survey have similar numbers of staff to those that responded, when the reality might be that they are smaller VSAs. Thus it is possible that this estimate may therefore be at the upper end of estimates of the universe, but in the absence of any other data we will proceed with the above estimate.

¹⁸ Subsequently in the report, as part of the economic impact assessment, we estimate the knock-on jobs sustained from the estimated 300 people working or employed in the sector as owners/managers or employees.

Funding Sources of VSAs

Figure 3.4 shows that the two main funding sources for VSAs in Ireland are fund-raising events (dinners, golf meetings etc.) and donations from members of the public and businesses. Government funding through Irish Aid is the third most common source of funding, followed by philanthropic/foundation donations. Included in the 'other category' are placement fees received from volunteers but VSAs are less reliant on these compared with the main funding sources.

Figure 3.4: Funding Sources of Volunteer Sending Agencies



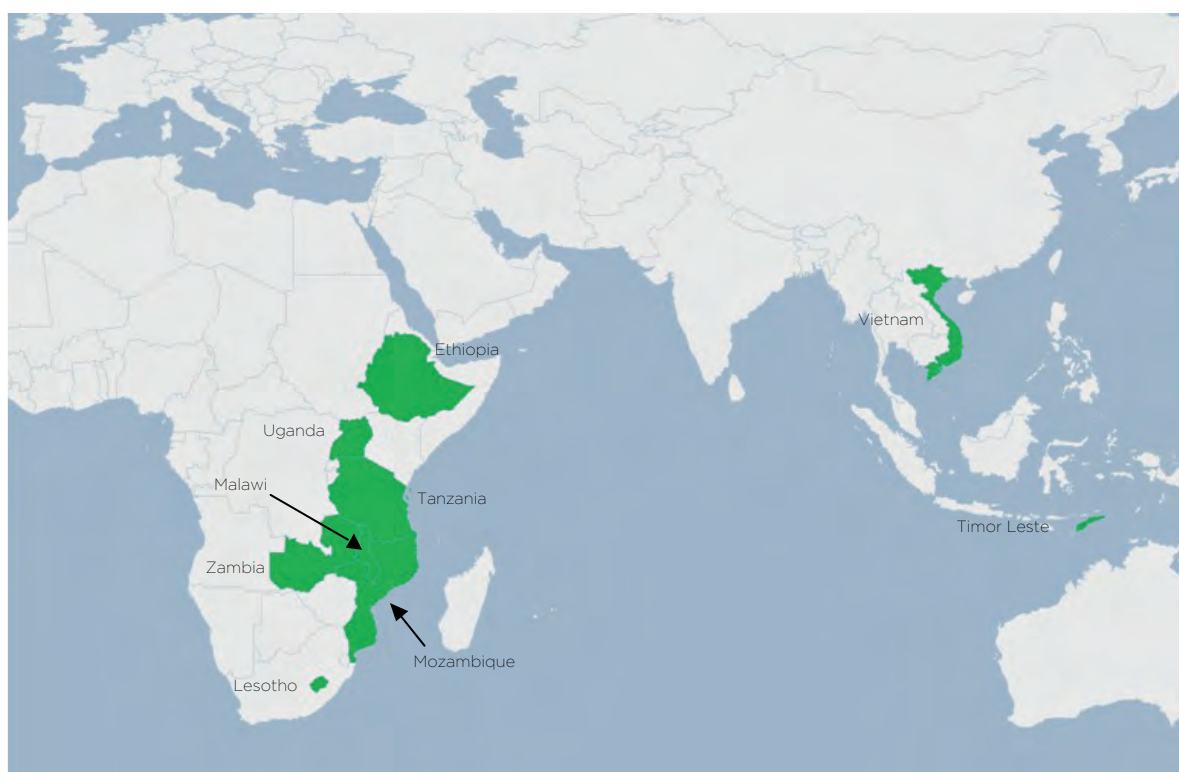
Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 7.

Note: 40 VSAs answered this question and 6 skipped the question.

Recipient Countries in 2012

In asking VSAs about the countries receiving their overseas volunteering placements in 2012, we were partly interested in their presence in the Irish Aid Partner Countries. As part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Irish Aid supports work in many countries throughout the developing world. Its main focus is on sub-Saharan Africa, where it concentrates its long-term development assistance in a number of partner countries, namely: Ethiopia; Lesotho; Malawi; Mozambique; Tanzania; Uganda; and Zambia. In Asia, the Partner Countries of Irish Aid were Vietnam and Timor Leste.

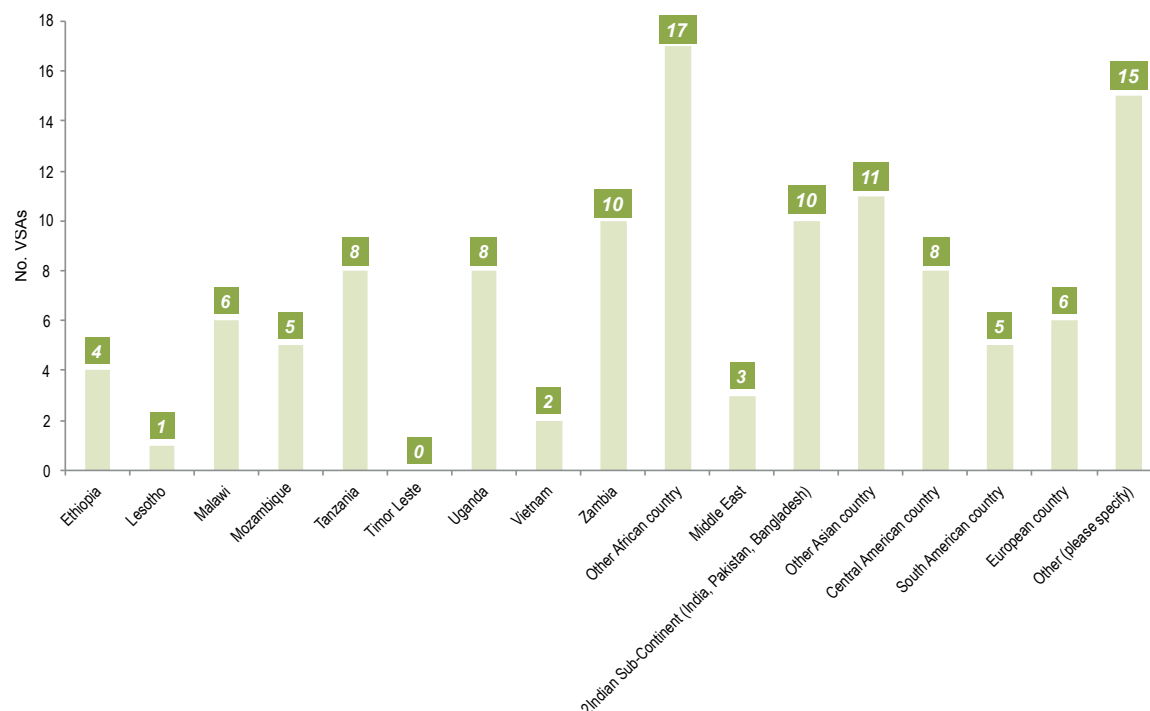
Figure 3.5: Map of Irish Aid Partner Countries 2012



Source: troyteq (mapping), PMCA Economic Consulting.

Figure 3.6 overleaf illustrates the numbers of VSAs who sent volunteers from Ireland to various developing countries during 2012. The average number of VSAs that were active in the Irish Aid Partner Countries is 5 compared with 7 for all countries/regions to which VSAs sent volunteers in 2012. The survey results suggest that the Irish Aid Partner Countries were/are reasonably well-covered by Irish-based VSAs (apart from Timor Leste to which there were no overseas volunteers last year).

Figure 3.6: Countries to which Volunteer Sending Agencies Sent Volunteers in 2012



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 8.

Note: 41 VSAs answered this question and 5 skipped the question.

Other (specific) countries mentioned by VSAs in the survey were (non-prompted) Haiti, Kenya, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Albania and Kosovo. Some of these countries have been badly affected by natural disaster or conflict in recent years, and their emergence in the survey illustrates the activities of Irish-based VSAs in this area of overseas volunteering. Taking all the countries mentioned by VSAs and grouping them regionally, 46% of overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012 were placed in Africa, 22% in Asia (including the Middle East), 16% in South and Central America and the same proportion in other parts of the world.

Number of Applications for Overseas Placements with VSAs in 2012

Table 3.3 overleaf shows that there were almost 3,800 applications for overseas placements among VSAs in 2012. The average number of applications per VSA was 95 and the even higher standard deviation figure of 155 indicates considerable variation around the average. Overall, the evidence from applications suggests that there is a significant interest in overseas volunteering in Ireland.

Table 3.3: Number of Applications for Overseas Placements with Volunteer Sending Agencies in 2012

Statistical Measure	2012
Number of applicants in 2012	3,789
Average number of applicants per VSA	95
Standard deviation of the number of applicants	122

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 9.

Note: 40 VSAs answered this question and 5 skipped the question.

Number of Overseas Volunteers that VSAs Aspired to Recruit in 2012

The next table provides statistics on the number of overseas volunteers that VSAs aspired to recruit for placements abroad in 2012.

It is seen that the total number of applications (3,789 in Table 3.3 above) is significantly higher than the number of overseas volunteers that VSAs in total aspired to recruit in 2012 (the figure of 2,202 in Table 3.4 below), which further illustrates the interest in overseas volunteering in Ireland.

Table 3.4: Number of Overseas Volunteers that Volunteer Sending Agencies Aspired to Recruit in 2012

Statistical Measure	2012
Number of applicants in 2012	2,202
Average number of applicants per VSA	65
Standard deviation of the number of applicants	114

*Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 10.
Note: 33 VSAs answered this question and 13 skipped the question.*

However, later in Section 4, where we profile the overseas volunteers in 2012, it is learned that the number of volunteers actually recruited was less than the number that VSA aspired or planned to recruit in 2012 (2,120 actual volunteers versus the figure of 2,202 aspired volunteers reported presently).¹⁹

In its previous (informal) data gathering exercise in 2011, independent of the 2012 survey results under consideration here, Comhlámh also found a shortfall in the actual number of overseas volunteers compared with the targeted or aspired number of volunteers in 2011.

Later in this report, we consider possible reasons for the difference between the actual number and the planned/aspired/targeted number of overseas volunteers among Irish-based VSAs.

¹⁹ The figure of 2,120 overseas volunteers appears in Table 4.1 (p. 42).

Interest in Overseas Volunteering in Recent Years

We asked VSAs about the extent to which interest in overseas volunteering has changed in the past 3-5 years (by number of applications, enquiries etc.).

According to the results presented in Table 3.5, 60% of VSAs surveyed reported a rise in interest in overseas volunteering as opposed to 24% saying that there has been a decrease in interest, with 17% stating that there has been no change in interest (however, care should be taken in these survey results due to the possible tendency for VSAs to report an increase in interest).

Table 3.5: Views of Volunteer Sending Agencies on the Extent to which Interest in Overseas Volunteering has Changed in the Past 3-5 Years (by Number of Applications, Enquiries etc.)

Extent of Interest in Overseas Volunteering	No. VSAs	% VSAs
Significant increase in interest (10% or more increase)	11	26%
Increase in interest (1-9% increase)	14	33%
No change in interest (0% increase)	7	17%
Decline in interest (1-9% decrease)	6	14%
Significant decline in interest (10% or more decrease)	4	10%
Total	42	100%

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 11.

Note: 42 VSAs answered this question and 4 skipped the question.

Average Fee Charged per Overseas Volunteer in 2012

According to the survey evidence given in Table 3.6, the mean of the average fee charged per overseas volunteer by VSAs was just over €1,400 in 2012 but the standard deviation also indicates wide variation around the average.

However, we should exercise caution in jumping to any conclusions that there is wide price dispersion in the sector because different average fees per volunteer reflect different duration periods and these are studied subsequently in Section 4 where we profile the overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012

Table 3.6: Average Fee (€) Charged per Overseas Volunteer by Volunteer Sending Agencies in 2012

Statistical Measure (€)	2012
Mean of the average fee charged per overseas volunteer	1,407
Standard deviation of the average fee charged per overseas volunteer	1,379

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 12.

Note: 34 VSAs answered this question and 12 skipped the question.

3.3 Summary

We have learned a lot about VSAs from the new survey evidence presented in this section, including:

- The vast majority (95%) are not-for-profit organisations;
- Many were founded or established in Ireland during the past decade and the flurry of new agencies during the 2000s suggests a dynamic sector responsive to demand at home and abroad;
- Educational activities, including development education, is the most common general objective of VSAs;
- An appreciably large number of VSAs are also involved in contributing towards the UN's Millennium Development Goals and a range of other objectives;
- The most common type of overseas volunteering programme to which VSAs in Ireland are working is 'individual volunteering', which covers a wide range of activities depending on the needs of the recipient and the experience/skills of the volunteers;
- The vast majority of VSAs (approximately 90%) are micro organisations with fewer than 10 paid or salaried staff and almost 30% have no such staff at all (single owner/manager);
- It is estimated that there are about 300 people directly working or employed in the VSA sector in Ireland, which we employ subsequently in our analysis of economic impact in Ireland;
- The two main sources of funding for VSAs in Ireland are fund-raising events (dinners, golf meetings etc.) and donations from members of the public/businesses;
- Government funding through Irish Aid is the third most common funding source, followed by philanthropic/foundation donations;
- Funding from placement fees received from volunteers, averaging about €1,400 per volunteer, is another source of funding but VSAs are less reliant on this source compared with the principal sources from donations and Irish Aid;
- Almost half (46%) of all overseas placements from Ireland in 2012 were in Africa, with 22% in Asia and the Middle East and 16% each in Latin America and other parts of the world;
- The nine Irish Aid Partner Countries are well-covered by Irish-based VSAs;
- There is a healthy interest in overseas volunteering in Ireland, with almost 3,800 applications received by 40 VSAs in 2012, equivalent to an average of 95 applications per VSA;
- Further illustration of the interest in volunteering abroad is given by the survey result that the aforementioned number of applications exceeded the number of overseas volunteers that VSA aspired to recruit in 2012;
- Most VSAs (60% of those surveyed) are of the view that interest in overseas volunteering from Ireland has increased in the past 3-5 years.²⁰

²⁰ However, another finding from the survey (reported in the next section of the report) is that the number of volunteers actually recruited was less than the number that VSAs aspired or planned to recruit in 2012, the possible reasons for which are also explored.

4. Profile of Overseas Volunteers

4.1 Introduction

In this section we proceed to profile overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012 by reference to gender, age and other characteristics. From the new survey evidence presented, we estimate the total number of overseas volunteers, which is used subsequently in Section 5, in the assessment of the socio-economic contribution of overseas volunteering (that section contains further profiling results used in the socio-economic impact analysis – e.g. hours per week committed by overseas volunteers and breakdowns by employment status, occupational background and activities etc.).

4.2 Survey Results

Number of Overseas Volunteers by Gender

Table 4.1 shows that the number of male and female overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012 was about the same. Of the 2,120 volunteers, 1,056 (49.8%) were male and 1,064 (50.2%) were female.

Table 4.1: Number of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 – By Gender

Statistical Measure	No. Overseas Volunteers 2012		
	Males	Females	Total
Total	1,056	1,064	2,120
Average per VSA	29	30	57
Standard deviation	61	43	101

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 13.
Note: 37 VSAs answered this question and 9 skipped the question.

The near symmetry in the number of male and female volunteers reported here contrasts with the split in the number of volunteers by gender found by Comhlámh in its (informal) data gathering exercise in 2011 (namely 56.6% female and 43.4% male). The difference could reflect variation in the amounts of male and female volunteers from year to year.

Another observation from Table 4.1 (and one referred to earlier in Section 3) is that the total number of volunteers recruited or placed abroad in 2012 was slightly less than the number that VSAs aspired to recruit in that year (i.e. 2,120 versus the 2,202 volunteers that VSAs aspired to recruit in 2012, Table 3.4, p. 25).

This suggests that, while there is evidence of plenty of interest in volunteering abroad, at the end of the selection process, fewer than the planned or aspired number of volunteers are being recruited by Irish-based VSAs. There may be a number of explanations for this, including the possibility that some people who applied for overseas placements may subsequently exit the process for various reasons (e.g. new job, further study etc.). Moreover, as shown below, most placements from Ireland are for short periods of time (less than 1 month), which may make it more likely that applicants will change their mind, other things being equal. The cost of volunteering abroad, including the average fee of €1,400 per volunteer (Table 3.6, p. 26), may also be a factor in accounting for fewer than the planned number being recruited.

Another possible reason for the shortfall in the actual number of volunteers recruited versus the aspired or planned number concerns the suitability of applicants for particular roles overseas (in some cases). For example, one VSA stated in its survey response that it recruits internationally for each post and aims to put the most adequate person in each post after interview. However, the VSA said that it has found it difficult to recruit from Ireland, as candidates from other countries (particularly the global South) often have more of the specific skills required.

Estimate of All Overseas Volunteers from Ireland

From the survey results presented in Table 4.1, we may proceed to estimate the 'universe' of all overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012. The 37 VSAs who responded to this question of the survey represent 47% of the 78 VSAs invited to complete the survey, in turn suggesting approximately 4,500 overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012. This estimate implicitly assumes that the non-respondents to the survey have similar numbers of volunteers to those that responded, when the reality might be that they are smaller VSAs. The estimate of 4,500 overseas volunteers in 2012 may therefore be at the upper end of estimates of the universe. Nevertheless, we will employ this (rounded) estimate subsequently in Section 5, in our estimation of the economic impact of overseas volunteering in Ireland.

(The size distribution of VSAs by the number of overseas volunteers – the sum of male and female overseas volunteers – is highly skewed, with a small number of VSAs having a relatively large number of volunteers, and statistical analysis reveals that the distribution conforms to lognormality.²¹ The well-fitting lognormal distribution has mean log volunteers of 3.11 and standard deviation of log volunteers of 1.48. From these parameters, the mean number of volunteers implied by the lognormal distribution is 67 per VSA and the lognormal median is 22, which in turn suggest that the universe of all volunteers from Ireland in 2012 was between 1,743 and 5,220. The simple arithmetic average of 57 volunteers per VSA shown in Table 4.1 implies a universe of almost 4,500 overseas volunteers.)²²

21 The lognormal distribution has been found to characterise firm size distributions in a number of economic activities through the years. The details of the analysis with the present survey data are given in the Annex at the end of the study (Figure A1 and Figure A2), which illustrate the goodness of fit of the lognormal distribution in this case. The classic treatment of the lognormal distribution is by Aitchison and Brown (Cambridge University Press, 1957).

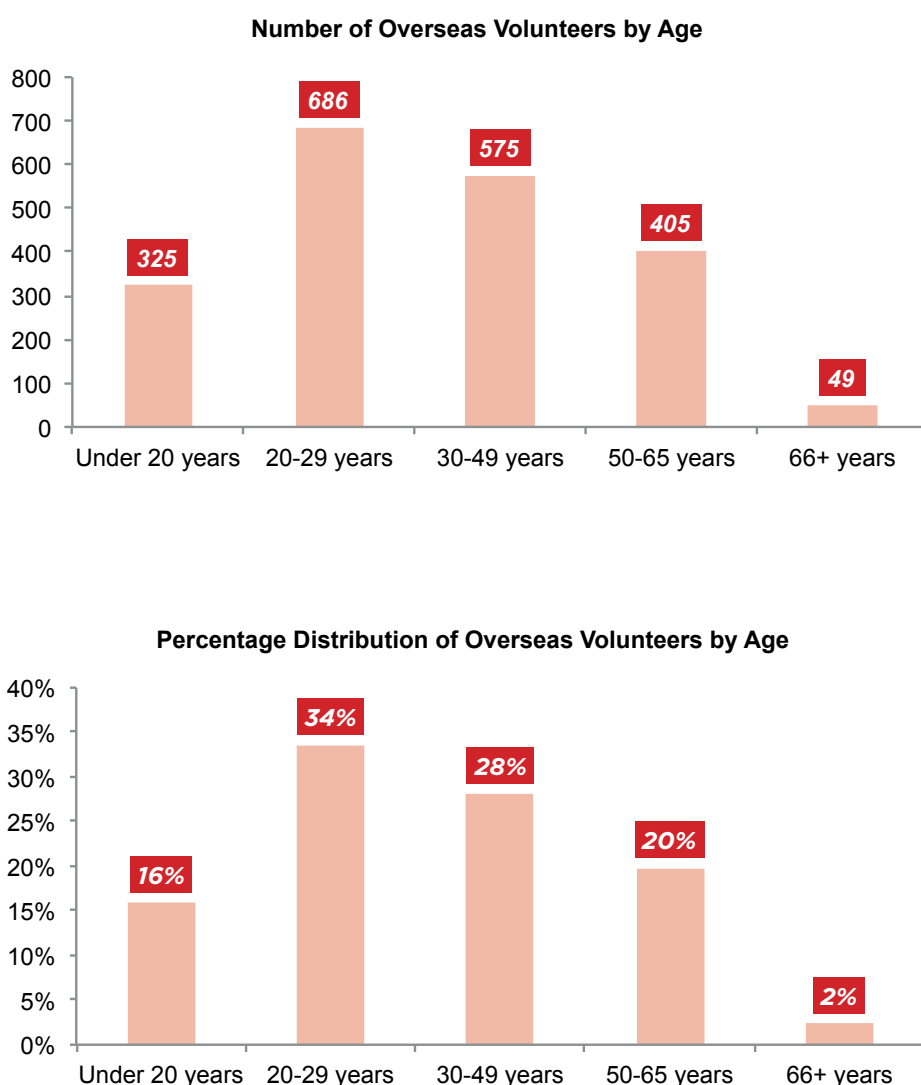
22 In general, in a lognormal distribution with mean and standard deviation of logs of μ and σ respectively, the arithmetic mean (e.g. number of volunteers here) is given as $\exp(\mu+\sigma^2/2)$ and the median as $\exp(\mu)$, where \exp is the base of the natural logarithmic function

Number of Overseas Volunteers by Age

Figure 4.1 shows that, on average across VSAs, the most frequent age bracket for overseas volunteers is 20-29 years, followed by 30-49 years. An appreciable number of volunteers are aged between 50 and 65. As might be expected, a relatively small number of overseas volunteers are aged over 66 years and a larger number are aged less than 20 years.

In its data gathering exercise conducted in 2011, Comhlámh found that the majority of overseas volunteers were aged between 18 and 30 years (55%), although an appreciably large proportion were aged between 41 and 65 years (23%), with over 10% aged between 51 and 65 years; on the other hand, relatively few overseas volunteers (1%) were aged 66+ years and about 3% were aged below 18 years.

Figure 4.1: Number and Percentage Distribution of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 - By Age



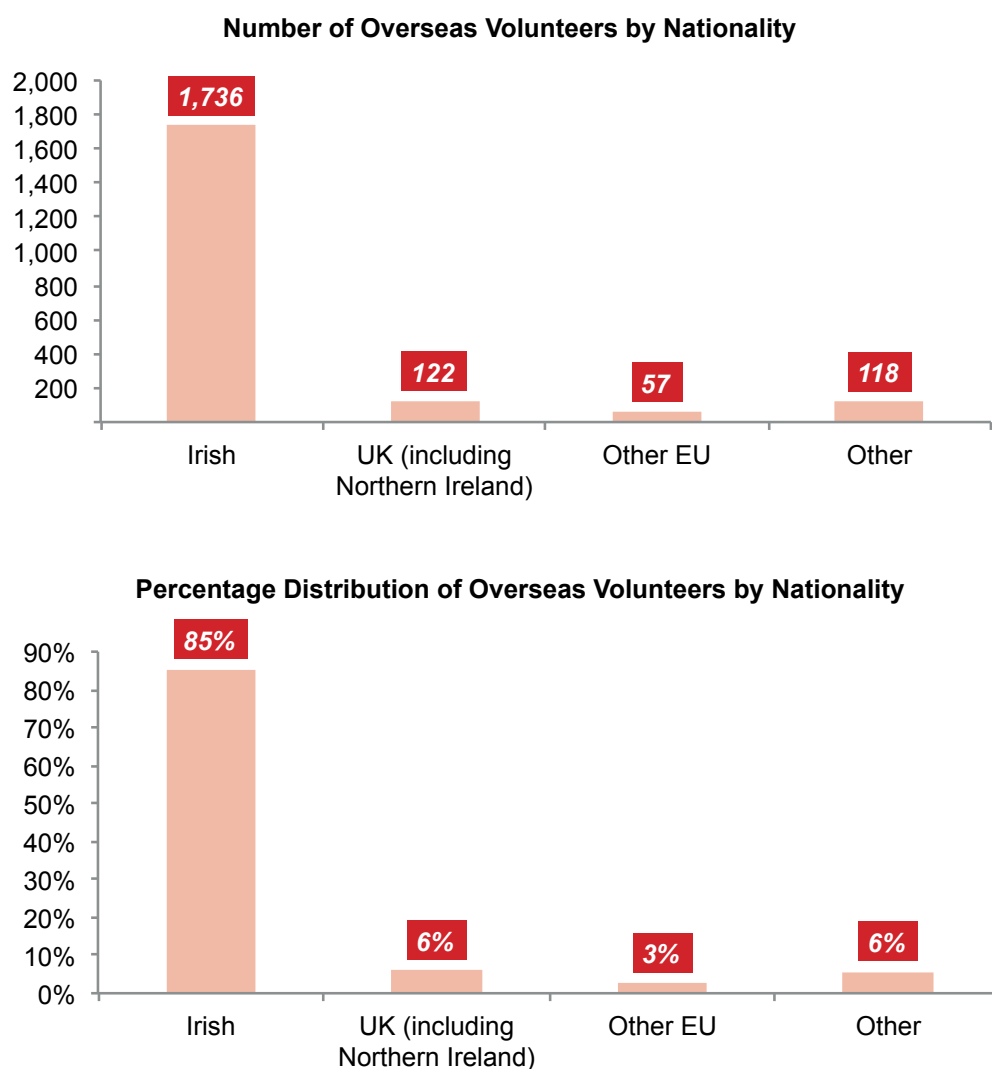
Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 14.

Note: 35 VSAs answered this question and 11 skipped the question.

Number of Overseas Volunteers by Nationality

Not surprisingly, most volunteers from Ireland in 2012 were Irish (85%) and small proportions of 6% each were from the UK (including Northern Ireland) and other (non-EU) countries (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Number and Percentage Distribution of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 - By Nationality



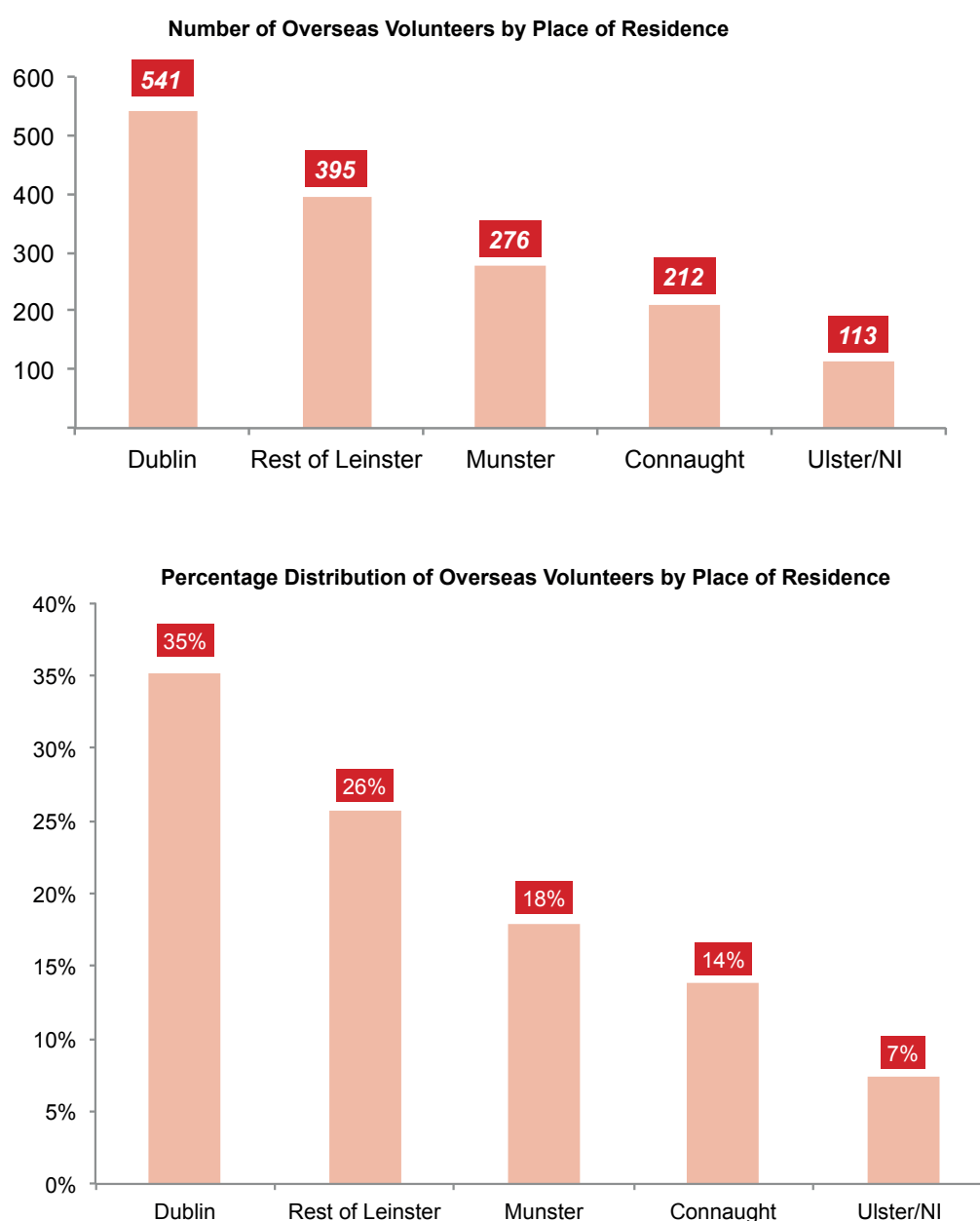
Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 15.

Note: 36 VSAs answered this question and 10 skipped the question.

Number of Overseas Volunteers by Place of Residence on the Island of Ireland

Dublin and the rest of Leinster together accounted for 61% of overseas volunteers in 2012, followed by Munster (18%), Connaught (14%) and Ulster (including NI) (7%). The proportions are broadly reflective of the general population (of Ireland, excluding NI), with the percentage of volunteers higher in Dublin (35% v 28% general population) but lower in Munster (18% v 27% general population).

Figure 4.3: Number and Percentage Distribution of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 - By Place of Residence in Island of Ireland



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 16.

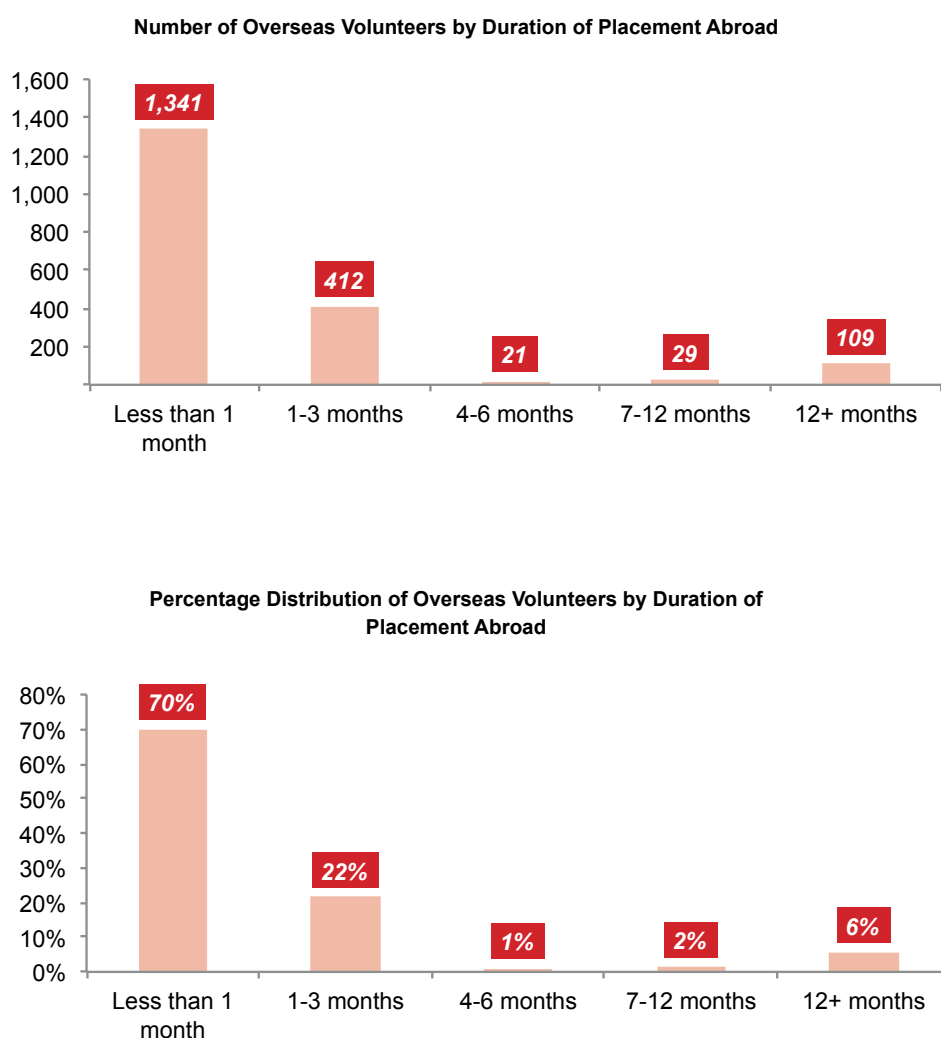
Note: 28 VSAs answered this question and 18 skipped the question.

Number of Overseas Volunteers by Duration of Placement Abroad

The vast majority of overseas placements are of short duration: in 2012, 70% were for less than one month and 22% for 1-3 months, meaning that 92% of placements are for 3 months or less.

The survey results illustrated in Figure 4.4 echo previous Comhlámh research in 2011 showing the most frequent placements offered by VSAs are for 0-2 weeks, 3-4 weeks and 2-3 months.

Figure 4.4: Number and Percentage Distribution of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 - By Duration of Placement Abroad



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 17.

Note: 34 VSAs answered this question and 12 skipped the question.



Participants Elaine, John and Jenny discuss continuous engagement at Comhlámh's What Next course

4.3 Summary

In sum, the survey evidence yields the following findings regarding the profile of people travelling from Ireland to volunteer overseas:

- In 2012, the number of male and female volunteers was approximately the same – of the 2,120 volunteers; 1,056 (49.8%) were male and 1,064 (50.2%) were female;
- However, the 2,120 volunteers were lower than the number that VSAs aspired to recruit in 2012 (namely 2,202), suggesting that, although there is plenty of interest in volunteering abroad, at the end of the selection process, fewer than the planned number of volunteers are being recruited by VSAs (in total), which may in turn mean that Irish VSAs face an issue over ensuring the recruitment of suitable volunteers for particular roles overseas (in some cases);
- Half of the overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012 were aged under 30 years and almost half again (48%) were aged between 30 and 65 years, while few volunteers are aged 66 years and over;
- In terms of nationality, the vast majority (85%) of volunteers in 2012 were Irish;
- Dublin and the rest of Leinster together accounted for 61% of overseas volunteers in 2012, followed by Munster (18%), Connaught (14%) and Ulster (including NI) (7%) – these proportions are broadly reflective of the general population, apart from Munster, where the 18% of overseas volunteers from that province in 2012 is noticeably lower than the 27% of the general population accounted for by Munster;
- The vast majority of overseas placements are of short duration – 70% were for less than one month and 22% for 1-3 months in 2012;
- The duration-of-placement findings echo previous Comhlámh research, which indicates that the most frequent placements offered by VSAs are for 0-2 weeks, 3-4 weeks and 2-3 months.

Further profiling results from the survey are presented in the next section on socio-economic impact.

5. Socio-Economic Contribution of Overseas Volunteers

5.1 Introduction

This section of the report is organised in two parts. In the first, we present further profiling survey results relating to the socio-economic contribution of overseas volunteers and then, in the second part, we conduct analysis based on the survey results to estimate the economic value of overseas volunteers in Ireland.

In respect of estimating the economic contribution of overseas volunteers, the ILO Manual²³ outlines two approaches to measurement:

- The opportunity cost approach, which measures the economic value of volunteering to the volunteer by assigning to the hours of volunteer work the average wage that the volunteer would earn if that volunteer worked at a regular job for the same hours;
- The replacement cost approach, which assigns to the hours of volunteer work what it would cost to hire someone for pay to do the work that the volunteer is doing for no pay.

The latter method is generally felt to be the most reasonable method in principle; however, in practice, it may be difficult to apply due to lack of detail from survey methods. The estimation procedure for valuing volunteer work recommended in the ILO Manual is the full replacement cost method, whereby the researcher assigns the salaries for the occupation and industry of the work performed to each hour volunteered (in the home country of the volunteer). Estimates of the salaries for different occupations are available from the CSO (for 2011) and these are applied below.

The methods for evaluating the economic contribution of overseas volunteers relate to direct economic value (i.e. the economic value that would be generated if the volunteers were working in their home country). However, not all volunteers are able to find work at home and one of the reasons why they spend periods of time volunteering abroad is to gain skills and experience that may enable them to be in a better position to find work on their return (among other reasons for overseas volunteering). Because of this reality, we must also control for the employment rate (as well as the duration of placements and average hours committed per week, and wage rates) in assessing the economic impact of volunteering in the home country.

In regard to social return, the Comhlámh Survey of VSAs 2012 yields new evidence on the extent to which overseas placements add to volunteers' skills and the results show groups of skills classified according to VSAs' perceptions about the extent to which

23 *Supra* footnote 1, p. 2.

they are enhanced or acquired whilst volunteering overseas. However, as remarked earlier, there may be an element of upward bias in these perceptions as VSAs will have a tendency to emphasise the skills dimension of overseas volunteering for recruitment purposes. Nevertheless, it is the relative rankings of the skills that are of interest here.

5.2 Survey Results on Socio-Economic Characteristics of Overseas Volunteers

Average Hours per Week on Overseas Voluntary Activities

The survey results presented in Table 5.1 below indicate that overseas volunteering is similar to a full-time occupation during the time committed. In particular, over 70% of VSAs estimate that their volunteers worked between 30 and 49 hours per week during their placements abroad in 2012.

Table 5.1: Estimate of Average Hours per Week Spent by Volunteers on Overseas Activities in 2012

Average Hour per Week on Voluntary Activities by Overseas Volunteers	No. VSAs	% VSAs
0-9 Hours per week	3	8%
10-19 Hours per week	0	0%
20-29 Hours per week	3	8%
30-39 Hours per week	15	41%
40-49 Hours per week	11	30%
50+ Hours per week	5	14%
Total	37	100%

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 18.

Note: 37 VSAs answered this question and 9 skipped the question.

Activities in which Overseas Volunteers were Most Active

VSAs were asked about the roles/activities in which their volunteers were most active during 2012. Using a wide choice set of activities, we asked VSAs to rank them with 1 most common, 2 next most common etc., ignoring any irrelevant activities. We then converted the rankings for each activity into a positive index for ease of interpretation and the results are presented below in Figure 5.1.

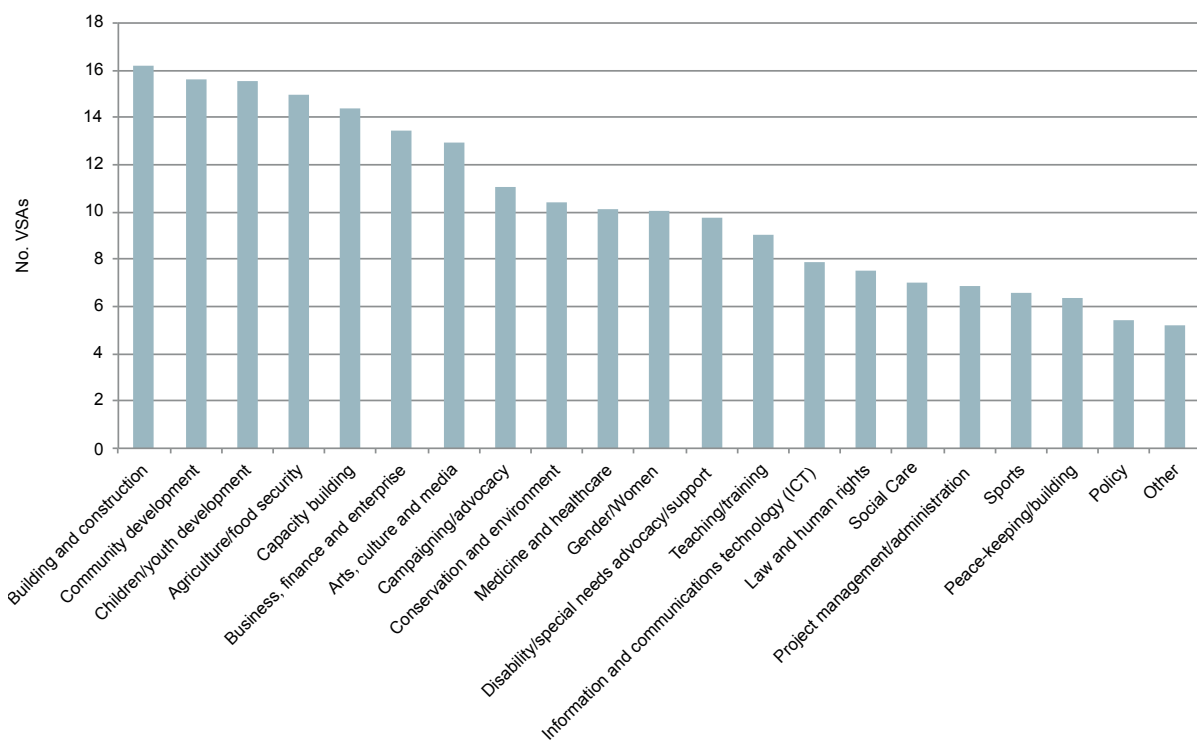
According to the responses given by VSAs, the most frequent specific activities in which overseas volunteers were involved during 2012 were:

- Building and construction;
- Community development;
- Children/youth development;

- Agriculture/food security;
- Capacity building;
- Business, finance and enterprise;
- Arts, culture and media;
- Campaigns and advocacy.

The chart shows a large and diverse range of activities in which volunteers were involved, also including teaching/training, law and human rights and sports.

Figure 5.1: Activities in which Overseas Volunteers were Most Active in 2012



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 19.

Note: 36 VSAs answered this question and 10 skipped the question.

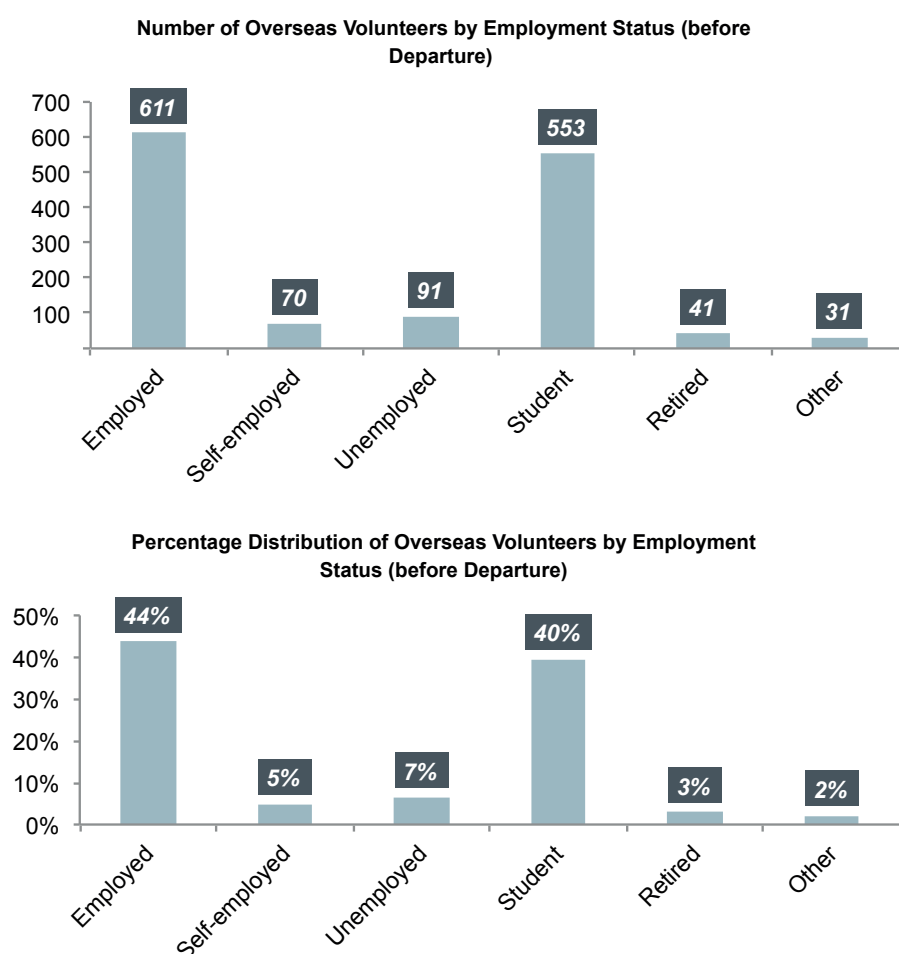
Employment Status of Overseas Volunteers

A popular perception exists that overseas volunteers are predominantly students, taking time out to devote to the developing world and in turn building their skills and world view.

The survey evidence illustrated in Figure 5.2 below confirms this view but also shows that people in employment make up a sizeable proportion of overseas volunteers (when stratified by broad employment status). The Comhlámh Survey reveals that employed people made up 44% of all overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012; the highest category by employment status. The second most popular category were students (40%) and unemployed people constituted 7%.

The popularity of overseas volunteering among employed people, as well as students, ties in with the short-term nature of the majority of overseas volunteering from Ireland and the popularity of individual volunteering noted earlier (Figure 4.4; p. 47, and Figure 3.2; p. 34, respectively) – this accords with anecdotal evidence that more people in work are combining voluntary work abroad with their holidays or short trips away (e.g. house-building in South Africa).

Figure 5.2: Number and Percentage Distribution of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 – By Employment Status



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 20.

Note: 34 VSAs answered this question and 12 skipped the question.

Overseas Volunteers by Occupational Background

In terms of the specific occupational background of the volunteers, Table 5.2 shows that students in full-time education constitute the largest grouping, followed by people working in education (teachers and trainers), in professional, scientific and technical jobs and in human health and social work.

When we compare these results with the specific activities undertaken while abroad (Figure 5.1 above), it becomes apparent that many volunteers are active in areas outside of their normal work/profession. As well as reflecting the generally short-term (and thus less skilled) nature of volunteering from Ireland, this finding also suggests that overseas volunteering is a means of acquiring new or complementary skills beyond an individual's normal activities and can serve to broaden people's horizons in a variety of ways.

Table 5.2: Number and Percentage Distribution of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 - By Occupational Background

Occupational Background	Number of Overseas Volunteers	% of Overseas Volunteers
Student - in full-time education	558	47%
Education	232	20%
Professional, scientific and technical	167	14%
Human health and social work	91	8%
Construction/building	30	3%
Financial, insurance and real estate	26	2%
Information and communication	25	2%
Arts, entertainment, recreation and other service activities	18	2%
Accommodation and food services	11	1%
Administration and support services	10	1%
Wholesale and retail trade (incl. repair of vehicles)	7	1%
Public administration and defence	3	0%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3	0%
Transportation and storage	1	0%
Industry/manufacturing	0	0%
Total	1,182	100%

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 21.

Note: 33 VSAs answered this question and 13 skipped the question. The difference in the proportion of students observed in this and the previous question is due to differences in the number of responses and the composition of respondents between Questions 21 and 20 of the survey. Both nonetheless show the importance of students.

Ahead of the estimate of the economic contribution of overseas volunteers, it is relevant to use the distribution of volunteers by occupational background given in Table 5.2 to estimate a weighted average salary associated with all overseas volunteers from Ireland. Using corresponding official data from the CSO on the average annual earnings of people in these occupations, we estimate an average annual equivalent salary of €22,643²⁴. (This estimate is well below the average industrial wage in Ireland, due to the high representation of students among overseas volunteers.)

²⁴ The CSO average annual earnings data (2011) are given in the Annex (Table A2). Regarding students, part-time students will tend to be captured in other categories in Table A2. In respect of full-time students, various information sources (newspapers, banking research etc.) suggest that students' earnings per year are in the region of €2,600 on average (not including grants or monies from parents, which vary widely).

Prior Experience of Volunteering

In its previous data gathering exercise (2011), Comhlámh reported that a very high proportion of volunteers (92%) had prior experience working in development overseas.

In the current survey, we consider volunteers by whether or not they had prior experience of overseas volunteering and whether or not they had prior experience of domestic volunteering, because the latter might lead to the former or vice-versa.

In contrast to the previous Comhlámh results, Table 5.3 indicates a roughly equal split between overseas volunteers with prior experience of placements abroad and those with no such prior experience.

Table 5.3: Number and Percentage Distribution of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 - By Prior Experience of Overseas Volunteering

Prior Experience of Overseas Volunteering	No. Overseas VSAs	% Overseas VSAs
Prior Experience	959	52%
No prior Experience	886	48%
Total	1845	100%

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 22.

Note: 34 VSAs answered this question and 12 skipped the question.

On the other hand, appreciably more volunteers have had experience of volunteering at home compared with those having no such experience (62%-to-38%). The finding of a positive relationship between having domestic and overseas volunteering echoes previous research (e.g. Machin, 2008),²⁵ indicating that international volunteering can encourage more involvement in local volunteering at home (by returned volunteers and others encouraged by them).

Table 5.4: Number and Percentage Distribution of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 - By Prior Experience of Volunteering at Home

Prior Experience of Volunteering in Ireland /Home Country	No. Overseas VSAs	% Overseas VSAs
Prior Experience	483	62%
No prior Experience	298	38%
Total	781	100%

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 22.

Note: 34 VSAs answered this question and 12 skipped the question.

²⁵ Supra Footnote 15, p. 13.

Educational Attainment of Overseas Volunteers

In respect of educational attainment, Table 5.5 shows that possessing a bachelor degree (Level 7 or 8 under the National Framework of Qualifications, NFQ) is the most common highest level of educational attainment among overseas volunteers (42% of volunteers), followed by upper post-primary level or its equivalent (Leaving Certificate) (23%), both of which reflect the strong student base among volunteers. Those volunteers with upper post-primary education as their highest level of education tend to be undergraduate students yet to gain their primary degrees.

Table 5.5: Number and Percentage Distribution of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 – By Highest Level of Educational Attainment/Qualification

Prior Experience of Overseas Volunteering	No. Overseas VSAs	% Overseas VSAs
Primary level	120	12.6%
Lower post-primary level or its equivalent (e.g. Irish Junior Certificate)	124	13.0%
Upper post-primary level or its equivalent (e.g. Irish Leaving Certificate)	223	23.3%
Bachelor degree or its equivalent (honours or non-honours level)	398	41.6%
Master degree or its equivalent (taught, research or taught/research)	89	9.3%
PhD/doctoral degree or its equivalent (taught, research or taught/research)	2	0.2%
Total	956	100%

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 23.

Note: 26 VSAs answered this question and 20 skipped the question.

It is interesting to see how the proportions in the table above compare with those of the general population as given in Census 2011. Of the general population (whose education has ceased and not ceased), 12.7% stated primary education, including no formal education, as their highest level of educational attainment, which is marginally higher than the 12.6% observed here. The proportions of the general population with lower post-primary and upper post-primary level education as their highest level of educational attainment in Census 2011 were 13.8% and 28.6% respectively (versus 13% and 23.3% here). However, the biggest difference occurs in regard to third-level educational attainment. Among the general population, 24.3% had a third-level non-degree, degree or higher as their highest level of educational attainment, whereas the corresponding proportion among overseas volunteers according to our survey is 51.2%. This confirms previous evidence that volunteering generally (domestic and overseas) is associated with higher educational attainment – volunteers are typically people with higher educational attainment than the general population.

In addition to the survey results regarding educational attainment in Table 5.5, VSAs also informed us that 78 overseas volunteers in 2012 (7.5% of the total number of overseas volunteers stated in response to Question 23) had a professional/technical qualification, which is strictly-speaking a professional or non-academic qualification (whereas the qualifications tabulated in Table 5.5 are generally of an academic nature, as set out, for example, in the NFQ).

Extent to which Overseas Volunteering Facilitates or Enhances Skills

Table 5.6 presents the results (percentage distribution form) of VSAs' views on the extent to which overseas volunteering facilitates or enhances people's skills.²⁶

The results show the extent to which volunteering abroad assists skill-building (although, as pointed out at the beginning of the report, in the outline of the methodology, there is a risk of bias in these views in that VSAs would be inclined to take a positive view).

Table 5.6: Views of Volunteer Sending Agencies on the Extent to which Overseas Volunteering Facilitates or Enhances Skills - Percentage Distribution

Key Skills	Views of VSAs - % Responses						Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	NIA	
Leadership	32%	59%	8%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Working as part of a team	65%	32%	3%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Communications	43%	46%	11%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Planning and organising	27%	62%	11%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Problem-solving	25%	67%	6%	3%	0%	0%	100%
Initiative and resourcefulness	41%	49%	8%	0%	0%	3%	100%
Flexibility and adaptability	59%	32%	5%	0%	0%	3%	100%
Foreign language	8%	28%	47%	11%	0%	6%	100%
Sharpening one's skills in chosen career path	14%	54%	27%	3%	0%	3%	100%
Teaching & training	35%	49%	14%	0%	0%	3%	100%
Capacity building	27%	54%	16%	0%	0%	3%	100%
Tolerance & patience	68%	30%	3%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Intercultural awareness	76%	19%	5%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Stress management	24%	38%	32%	0%	0%	5%	100%
Independence (self-confidence/sufficiency/resilience)	50%	47%	3%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Active citizenship	42%	31%	28%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Campaigning/advocacy skills	19%	43%	32%	3%	0%	3%	100%

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 24.

Note: 37 VSAs answered this question and 9 skipped the question.

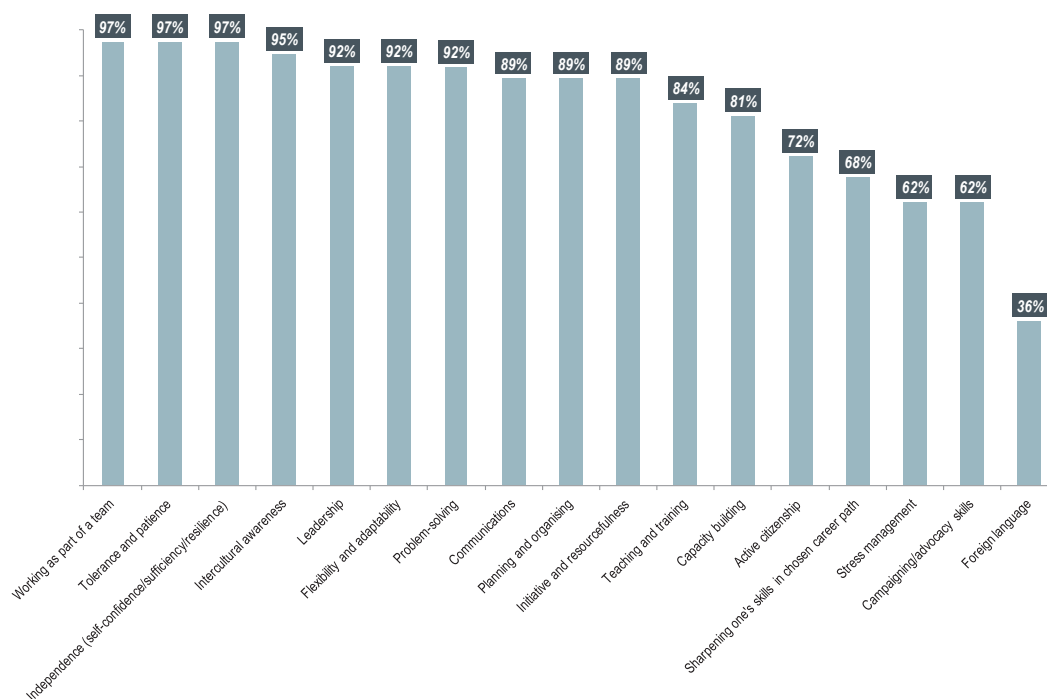
²⁶ The number of responses underlying the percentage distribution is given in Table A3 in the Annex.

Bearing in mind the inherent tendency for VSAs to be positive about the skills acquired or enhanced through overseas volunteering, of interest is the relative importance of the different skills (i.e. which skills arising from overseas volunteering are ranked by VSAs as especially important?).

To gain more insight into this, we may rank the various skills according to the extent to which VSAs either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that they are facilitated or enhanced by overseas volunteering.

The results of this ranking exercise are presented in Figure 5.3, where we report the percentage of VSAs in 'strong agreement' or 'agreement' with the view that overseas volunteering facilitates or enhances each skill.

Figure 5.3: Views of Volunteer Sending Agencies on the Extent to which Overseas Volunteering Facilitates or Enhances Skills – Percentage of VSAs in Strong Agreement or Agreement that Overseas Volunteering Facilitates or Enhances Skills



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 24.

Note: 37 VSAs answered this question and 9 skipped the question.

From the graph, we may discern the following groups of skills enhanced or facilitated by overseas volunteering:

- 90+% of VSAs 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that these skills are enhanced or facilitated by overseas volunteering;
 - o Working as part of a team (97%)
 - o Tolerance and patience (97%)
 - o Independence (self-confidence/sufficiency/resilience) (97%)
 - o Intercultural awareness (95%)

- o Leadership (92%)
- o Flexibility and adaptability (92%)
- o Problem-solving (92%)
- 80-89% of VSAs 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that these skills are enhanced or facilitated by overseas volunteering;
 - o Communications (89%)
 - o Planning and organising (89%)
 - o Initiative and resourcefulness (89%)
 - o Teaching and training (84%)
 - o Capacity building (81%)
- 60-79% of VSAs 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that these skills are enhanced or facilitated by overseas volunteering;
 - o Active citizenship (72%)
 - o Sharpening one's skills in chosen career path (68%)
 - o Stress management (62%)
 - o Campaigning/advocacy skills (62%)
- Less than 50% of VSAs 'strongly agree'/'agree' that this skills are enhanced/facilitated by overseas volunteering;
 - o Foreign language (36%).

Given the short-term nature of overseas volunteering from Ireland noted earlier, and the fact that many of the volunteers are active in areas outside of their normal areas of work/competencies, it is not surprising to find that skills like team-working, flexibility and problem-solving are particularly enhanced (according to VSAs), while skills like campaigning/advocacy and foreign language learning appear to be less strongly enhanced.

5.3 Analysis of Socio-Economic Impact from the Survey Results

Socio-Economic Impact

Equivalent Economic Value of Overseas Volunteers in Ireland

Equipped with the new Comhlámh survey data (2012), we can proceed to estimate the proportion of Irish GDP accounted for by the work of overseas volunteers from Ireland. In what follows, we outline the derivation of the estimate in stages, beginning with a simplified estimate before relaxing the restrictive assumptions imposed to arrive at an informed estimate that makes use of available data (from international sources as well as the new evidence from the survey under consideration).

Earlier in the report (see the discussion of the number of overseas volunteers by gender, Table 4.1; p. 42), we estimated that there were in the region of 4,500 overseas volunteers in total from Ireland in 2012. It will be recalled from Section 4 that this estimate was based on the 2,120 male and female volunteers across all VSAs who responded to Question 13 of the survey. Thirty-seven (37) of the 78 VSAs contacted



responded to this question and the response rate of 47% implies approximately 4,500 overseas volunteers in total from Ireland in 2012. While this calculation may risk being an overestimate of the total number of overseas volunteers from Ireland in that year, because it implicitly assumes that the VSAs who did not respond to the survey had the same average number of overseas volunteers as those who responded to the survey when the reality might be different, in the absence of any other estimates, we will employ the estimate of 4,500 as the basis of our estimation of the economic impact.

Previously in this section, we estimated a weighted average annual salary equivalent of €22,643 in respect of the overseas volunteers in 2012 (based on 2011 CSO data on average annual earnings data and including the fact that almost half of the volunteers were students in full-time education).²⁷ These estimates imply that the total value of the activities of overseas volunteers was equivalent to almost €102 million, which translates into about 0.06% of Irish GDP in that year.²⁸

As it stands, this proportion is significantly larger than what previous studies suggest is likely for Ireland (namely that overseas volunteering activities from Ireland would account for the equivalent of approximately 0.01% of Irish GDP).²⁹ However, the estimated proportion of 0.06% needs to be adjusted because it is based on the assumptions that: (1) the estimated 4,500 overseas volunteers worked abroad during the whole of the year; and that (2) all of the volunteers would be able to find work or would be willing to work if they had been living in Ireland during 2012.³⁰

Data from the IMF, CSO and the Central Bank of Ireland indicates that there were roughly 1.8m people working in the country in 2012. This represents 59% of all people living in the country aged between 15 and 64 years (the employment rate). We also need to factor-in the duration of placements among overseas volunteers in 2012. Using the earlier survey evidence (Figure 4.4; p. 47), the average duration of an overseas volunteering placement in 2012 was 2 months.³¹ Applying this figure and the 59% employment rate suggest that overseas volunteers contributed the equivalent of 0.01% of Irish GDP in 2012 or approximately €10m. This estimate is in the ballpark of the estimates suggested by previous research (JHU) for Ireland (see Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 in Section 2).

Employment Impact of VSAs in Ireland

We can also estimate the jobs impact of the VSA sector in Ireland. This is done by estimating the number of direct jobs in the sector and then applying an employment multiplier to estimate the total number of jobs sustained in the sector (given as the sum of the number of direct and indirect jobs).

27 The number and percentage distribution of overseas volunteers in 2012 by occupational background is given in Table 5.2 and the CSO average annual earnings data are given in Table A2 in the Annex. The weighted average salary estimate of €22,643 is based on the information contained in these two tables.

28 According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its World Economic Outlook (April 2013), Ireland's (nominal) GDP was €163.6 billion in 2012.

29 See Table 2.1 (p. 25) and Figure 2.1 (p. 26) in Section 2.

30 It also assumes that the overseas volunteers from Ireland in 2012 were working in activities reflecting their normal occupations at home, when in fact the survey evidence shows that in many cases they were volunteering in different activities in host countries (e.g. professionals with non-construction related qualifications volunteering in house-building in South Africa).

31 This estimate is based on the assumption of an average duration of 18 months for the overseas volunteers in 12+ month placements.

It was earlier estimated that there are about 300 people directly working or employed in the sector (Figure 3.3, p. 35). Using estimated Type II multipliers, it is estimated that these 300 jobs helped to sustain a further 111-181 jobs in Ireland or 411-481 jobs in total.³²

Key Skills Acquired or Enhanced while Volunteering Overseas

Almost certainly the figures for the economic impact presented above underestimate the true socio-economic contribution of the sector. This is because the estimates are pitched at a given point in time and neglect the fact that overseas volunteering involves the acquisition or development of key skills, which are transferable through one's career and life. These are dynamic rather than static benefits, and in turn contribute to productivity and innovation, and are the drivers of economic competitiveness and sustainable growth.

According to the new survey evidence, the key skills associated with overseas volunteering are:

- Working as part of a team;
- Tolerance and patience;
- Independence (self-confidence/sufficiency/resilience);
- Intercultural awareness;
- Leadership;
- Flexibility and adaptability; and
- Problem-solving.

These key skills illustrate the practical nature of overseas volunteering from Ireland and, whilst perceived as generally 'soft', are nevertheless important from a human capital point of view. At the end of the report, we suggest ways in which further research by Comhlámh might be undertaken in the future to drill further into the skills acquired from overseas volunteering.

³² The Type II multipliers incorporate the effects of final consumer demand as well as supply chain effects between VSAs and other organisations they deal with (for supplies and services etc.). The Type II multipliers are estimated using CSO input-output tables and are based on two pre-defined CSO sectors ('other services' and 'membership organisation services nec (not elsewhere classified)' with estimates Type II employment multipliers of 1.37 and 1.60 respectively, generating total employment contributions of 411 and 481).

6. Issues Affecting Overseas Volunteering

We also asked VSAs about their views on issues that might affect the recruitment of overseas volunteers in Ireland. The percentage responses are shown in Table 6.1.³³

Table 6.1: Views of Volunteer Sending Agencies on Issues Affecting the Recruitment of Overseas Volunteers in Ireland - Percentage Distribution

	Views of VSAs - % Responses			Total
	Strongly discourages overseas volunteering	Slightly discourages overseas volunteering	Not an issue	
Key Skills				
Safety abroad	14%	76%	11%	100%
Being away from home	5%	41%	54%	100%
Living in tough conditions	3%	64%	33%	100%
Risk of becoming ill	5%	73%	22%	100%
Limited or no access to leisure or entertainment facilities	3%	16%	81%	100%
Taking time out from one's study/ career	22%	22%	57%	100%
Living and working outside of one's comfort zone	5%	49%	46%	100%
Financial cost of overseas volunteering	46%	43%	11%	100%
Scepticism about the worth/ value of overseas volunteering	8%	57%	35%	100%

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 25.

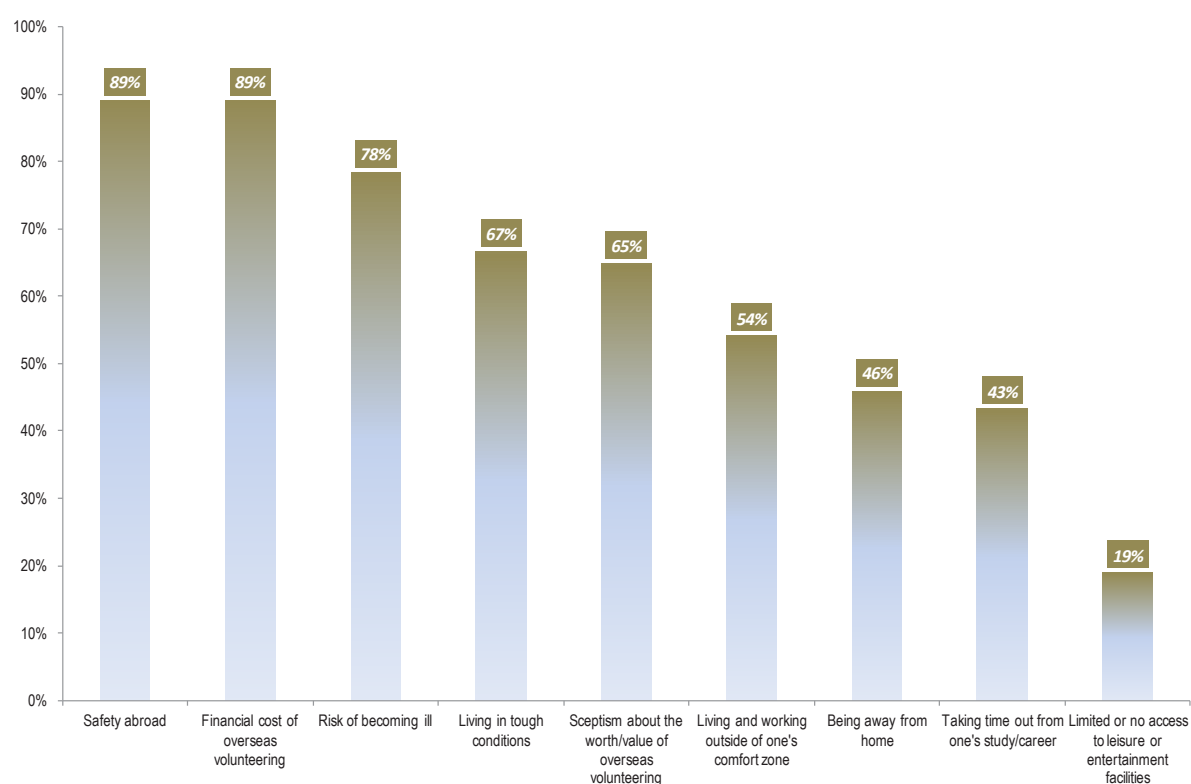
Note: 37 VSAs answered this question and 9 skipped the question.

According to the survey evidence, the two main issues are (1) safety abroad and (2) financial cost of overseas volunteering. In each case, 89-90% of VSAs are of the view that the issue either 'strongly discourages' or 'slightly discourages' overseas volunteering from Ireland.

³³ The corresponding numbers of responses are reported in Table A4 in the Annex.

Figure 6.1 illustrates the rank ordering of the issues by the proportion of VSAs considering each to strongly or slightly discourage overseas volunteering, where it is seen that safety abroad and the financial cost of overseas volunteering stand out. The latter issue may be compounded by the current economic challenges but might ease in the coming years as the Irish economy recovers – this is something that Comhlámh may wish to monitor in future exercises. The issue of safety abroad may be an ongoing one and reflects people’s perceptions of the developing world as being more dangerous than Ireland. On the other hand, overseas volunteers tend to be self-selecting and interested in spending time in poorer parts of the world where life can be radically and materially different – this is evident in the other results shown in the chart below.

Figure 6.1: Views of Volunteer Sending Agencies on Issues Affecting the Recruitment of Overseas Volunteers in Ireland – Percentage of VSAs of the View that Issue ‘Strongly’ or ‘Slightly Discourages Overseas Volunteering’



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 25.

Note: 37 VSAs answered this question and 9 skipped the question.

Finally, Box 6.1 reports some qualitative comments provided by VSAs in response to the last question on the survey. They show the trend towards shorter-term volunteering, the effects of the economic downturn, issues in matching volunteers with needs overseas and capacity issues in host countries.



UCDVO volunteers before taking part in a 'Coming Home Day', facilitated by Comhlámh

Box 6.1: Sample of (Non-Attributed) Comments from Volunteer Sending Agencies

"Change in mentality seen over the years. People prefer shorter-term volunteering".

"The current economic climate has a strong influence on volunteers' financial capacity to volunteer overseas. We have seen a decrease in new applicants as well as return volunteers, which is directly related to people not being able to afford to go and also feeling that fundraising is more of a challenge than it used to be as there is less money to go around".

"We have a global recruitment policy. This means that we recruit globally for each post and put the most adequate person in each post after interview. We have found it difficult to recruit from Ireland, as often the quality of candidates from other countries (particularly the global South) will often be higher and have more of the more specific skills. We welcome more Irish individuals involved in our programmes".

"We only send a small number of volunteers and do not actively recruit as we use people we know from our services in Ireland or who have been recommended by people we know".

"2012 was our first year to take volunteers to Uganda – we have only been in existence as an organisation since September 2010".

"In 2013 we will bring 6 (4 male and 2 female). This is the maximum we would bring – we are restricted by our accommodation and, as the host village we work in is a small, rural village, we don't want to 'invade' them with big numbers of volunteers".

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 26.

Note: 11 VSAs answered this question and 35 skipped the question.

7. Concluding Remarks and Further Research Possibilities

This study has sought to add value and new insights to the work of Comhlámh in promoting best practice in international volunteering, and to VSAs in considering, researching and documenting the contribution and impact of overseas volunteers from Ireland to local and global society and economy.

As well as providing extensive new primary research information about VSAs and their volunteers, it is also found that overseas volunteering exerts a positive socio-economic impact in Ireland (even though the sector is small in absolute terms). The sector is practically-oriented and generally successful in matching volunteers to activities abroad on a predominantly short-term and flexible basis: one of the salient conclusions of the research is that many volunteers are active in areas outside of their normal sphere of work, which can be positive economically, socially and culturally on their return to Ireland.

7.1 Opportunities for Future Research

Next year and beyond, it is recommended that Comhlámh conducts a similar survey of VSAs that would seek to capture the following quantitative data on international volunteers (not necessarily limited to):

- Number of applicants during the year;
- Number of volunteers recruited by categories (gender, age, place of residence in Ireland, duration of placement, occupational background, higher educational attainment etc.);
- Reasons for any differences between the number of recruited volunteers and volunteers that VSAs planned to recruit during the year in question.

Over time, the goal would be to use the annual survey results to construct time series data on overseas volunteering, which would provide a rich and dynamic source of information on this aspect of international development and enable further analysis of the international volunteering sector in the context of wider economic and societal changes.

Next year and afterwards, it would also be beneficial for Comhlámh to conduct qualitative research on the contribution of placements abroad using the following methods:

- Focus groups of returned volunteers (we would suggest 2-3 groups of

approximately 10 returned volunteers each) to ascertain their views on their experiences abroad, key skills acquired or enhanced and motivations for volunteering abroad in the first place;

- Interviews with people who volunteered abroad 5 and more years ago to assess how the experiences impacted on their lives and contributed to their employment history since; and
- Interviews with a sample of employers or employer groups to gauge the extent, if any, to which they might recognise or be prepared to recognise overseas volunteering as an input into the recruitment process and/or skills sought by employers.

7.2 Need for More Systematic Data Collection

It is also hoped that this study will help encourage VSAs to systematically collect the types of quantitative data examined during this study. While we appreciate the small-scale nature of the sector, collecting this information is important in helping to sustain the sector, as well as promoting its achievements among as wide an audience as possible.

Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 Questionnaire

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012

Introduction

This survey of volunteer sending agencies (VSAs) is being carried out by Comhlámh with the objective of capturing important new statistical information on overseas volunteering from Ireland during 2012. The survey results will also be of value in enhancing our understanding of the role of the VSA sector in Ireland, including its social and economic contributions through skills development and social capital formation. The survey comes in the context of the Government's White Paper Review of overseas assistance and Ireland's Presidency of the European Union from January 2013.

The survey questionnaire has been designed with the assistance of Dr. Pat McCloughan, Managing Director of PMCA Economic Consulting. Dr. McCloughan will independently analyse the survey responses and produce a report on the findings, which Comhlámh plans to publish in 2013.

All responses to the survey will be treated in strictest confidence: only aggregated results will be presented and nothing will be attributed to any organisation or individual responding to the survey. Furthermore, nothing in this survey asks you to give any information on any individual volunteer or member of staff at your organisation or disclose any data that might be deemed sensitive.

Comhlámh would be delighted if you could take time to complete the survey questionnaire by 5pm, Monday 21 January 2013. We would kindly request that your responses are accurate and consistent with your internal records. We also recognise that you may not have all the data we are requesting and would therefore welcome that you respond to the survey as best you can (please complete as many of the questions as you can). You need not complete the survey in one sitting but rather can fill it in stages (if you like). We recommend that you read through the survey questions first before responding to the questions.

If you have any queries regarding any aspect of the survey, please contact: Ms. Fleachta Phelan, Comhlámh, Ballast House (2nd Floor), Aston Quay, Dublin 2; Tel 01 478 3490; email fleachta@comhlamh.org. You can also contact Dr. Pat McCloughan (pat@pmca.ie or 086 3576461).

About Comhlámh
Comhlámh is the Irish Association of Development Workers and Volunteers. Our mission is to foster good practice and critical engagement in volunteering and action for development. We do this by: promoting and supporting good practice standards via our Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Agencies; providing information, training and supports to volunteers; producing research and influencing policy; and empowering volunteers to engage in action for development in and from Ireland. This contributes to our vision, of volunteers and development workers working in solidarity for a just, equitable and sustainable world.

About Dr. Pat McCloughan
Dr. McCloughan is Managing Director of PMCA Economic Consulting and has over 20 years' professional experience in economics and statistics. He was the lead author of the 2011 report published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions on participation in volunteering and unpaid work in the European Union (EU27). He has recently completed a study on the economic impact of international non-governmental organisation (NGOs) active in international development work for Dóchas and Plan Ireland.

About Your Organisation

1. Name of your organisation (optional)

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**Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies
2012 Questionnaire**

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012

2. Organisational form of your organisation (please tick one box only)?

- Not-for-profit
 Government-based
 For profit

Other (please specify)

3. Year in which your organisation was founded (please tick one box only) (if your organisation is part of an international group, please indicate when first established in Ireland)

- Pre-1970s
 1970s
 1980s
 1990s
 2000s
 Since 2010

4. General objectives of your organisation (please tick one or more boxes as appropriate)

- Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty
 Achieve universal primary education
 Promote gender equality and empowering women
 Reduce child mortality
 Improve maternal health
 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
 Ensure environmental sustainability
 Develop a global partnership for development
 Respond to acute crisis/disaster (natural or man-made)
 Human rights
 Promote socio-economic development (e.g. roads, infrastructure, trade and/or investment)
 Development education
 Other (please specify)

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Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 Questionnaire

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012

5. Types of volunteering programme to which your organisation is currently working (please tick one or more boxes as appropriate)

Corporate/private sector volunteering

Diaspora

Youth

Exchange/Reciprocal

South-North

South-South

Intercultural/peace building

Professional skills development

Group-based volunteering

Individual volunteering

Other (please specify)

6. Total number of paid/salaried staff at your organisation at the end of 2012 (in your Irish office and not international staff) (full-time/part-time, permanent/temporary) (please tick one box only)

0 staff

1-9 staff

10-19 staff

20-49 staff

50+ staff

7. Funding sources for your organisation (please tick one or more boxes as appropriate)

Irish Aid

European Union

Other government/official funding

Non-governmental organisation (NGO) funding

Philanthropic/foundation

Donations from the public/businesses

Fund-raising events (dinners, golf etc.)

Other (please specify)

**Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies
2012 Questionnaire**

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012

8. Countries to which your organisation sent volunteers in 2012 (please tick one or more boxes as appropriate)

- Ethiopia
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Tanzania
- Timor Leste
- Uganda
- Vietnam
- Zambia
- Other African country
- Middle East
- Indian Sub-Continent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh)
- Other Asian country
- Central American country
- South American country
- European country
- Other (please specify)

9. Number of applications to your organisation in 2012 for overseas volunteering placements

No. applications in 2012

10. If applicable, the number of overseas volunteers your organisation aspired to recruit in 2012

Aspired no. overseas volunteers in 2012

11. Extent to which interest in overseas volunteering at your organisation has changed in the past 3-5 years (by number of applications, enquiries etc.) (please tick one box only)

- Significant increase in interest (10% or more increase)
- Increase in interest (1-9% increase)
- No change in interest (0% or so change)
- Decline in interest (1-9% decrease)
- Significant decline in interest (10% or more decrease)

Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 Questionnaire

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012

12. Average fee (€) charged per volunteer sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 (if any)

Average fee (€) per volunteer 2012

Breakdown of Volunteers Sent Abroad by Categories

The following questions request data regarding the numbers of volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 according to different categories (i.e. sent from Ireland). Please complete the questions as accurately as you can where possible; leave blank where there is insufficient information to complete a question.

13. Number of volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 by gender

No. male volunteers sent abroad

No. female volunteers sent abroad

14. Number of volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 by age

No. volunteers sent abroad aged under 20 years

No. volunteers sent abroad aged 20-29 years

No. volunteers sent abroad aged 30-49 years

No. volunteers sent abroad aged 50-65 years

No. volunteers sent abroad aged 66+ years

15. Number of volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 by nationality

Irish

UK (including Northern Ireland)

Other EU

Other

16. Number of volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 by place of residence in Ireland/Island of Ireland

Dublin

Rest of Leinster (Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Offaly, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow)

Munster (Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford)

Connaught (Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo)

Ulster/Ni (Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Derry/Londonderry, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Monaghan, Tyrone)

17. Number of volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 by duration of placement

No. volunteers sent abroad for less than 1 month

No. volunteers sent abroad for 1-3 months

No. volunteers sent abroad for 4-6 months

No. volunteers sent abroad for 7-12 months

No. volunteers sent abroad for 12+ months

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**Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies
2012 Questionnaire**

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012

18. Estimate of average hours per week spent on voluntary activities by volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 (please tick one box only)

- 0-9 hours per week
- 10-19 hours per week
- 20-29 hours per week
- 30-39 hours per week
- 40-49 hours per week
- 50+ hours per week

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Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 Questionnaire

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012	
19. Roles/activities that volunteers with your organisation were most active in 2012 (please rank with 1 most common, 2 next most common etc.) (please ignore any activities not relevant to your organisation's overseas volunteers).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture/food security
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arts, culture and media
<input type="checkbox"/>	Building and construction
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business, finance and enterprise
<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaigning/advocacy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Capacity building
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children/youth development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservation and environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability/special needs advocacy/support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender/women
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information and communications technology (ICT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Law and human rights
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medicine and healthcare
<input type="checkbox"/>	Peace-keeping/building
<input type="checkbox"/>	Project management/administration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Care
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sports
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teaching/training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
Breakdown of Volunteers Sent Abroad by Categories (Cont'd)	

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**Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies
2012 Questionnaire**

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012

20. Number of volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 by employment status before departure

Employed	<input type="text"/>
Self-employed	<input type="text"/>
Unemployed	<input type="text"/>
Student	<input type="text"/>
Retired	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

21. Approximate number of volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 by occupational background

Student - in full-time education	<input type="text"/>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	<input type="text"/>
Industry/manufacturing	<input type="text"/>
Construction/building	<input type="text"/>
Wholesale and retail trade (incl. repair of vehicles)	<input type="text"/>
Transportation and storage	<input type="text"/>
Accommodation and food services	<input type="text"/>
Information and communication	<input type="text"/>
Financial, insurance and real estate	<input type="text"/>
Professional, scientific and technical	<input type="text"/>
Administration and support services	<input type="text"/>
Public administration and defence	<input type="text"/>
Education	<input type="text"/>
Human health and social work	<input type="text"/>
Arts, entertainment, recreation and other service activities	<input type="text"/>

22. Approximate number of volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 according to whether they had prior experience of volunteering (with your organisation or any other volunteering organisation)

Prior experience of volunteering abroad	<input type="text"/>
No prior experience of volunteering abroad	<input type="text"/>
Prior experience of volunteering at home (Ireland or home country)	<input type="text"/>
No prior experience of volunteering at home (Ireland or home country)	<input type="text"/>

Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 Questionnaire

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012						
23. Number of volunteers sent abroad by your organisation in 2012 by highest level of educational attainment/qualification						
Primary level	<input type="text"/>					
Lower post-primary level or its equivalent (e.g. Irish Junior Certificate)	<input type="text"/>					
Upper post-primary level or its equivalent (e.g. Irish Leaving Certificate)	<input type="text"/>					
Bachelor degree or its equivalent (honours or non-honours level)	<input type="text"/>					
Master degree or its equivalent (taught, research or taught/research)	<input type="text"/>					
PhD/doctoral degree or its equivalent (taught, research or taught/research)	<input type="text"/>					
Professional/technical qualification accredited by a body (e.g. accounting, law, health)	<input type="text"/>					
Additional Survey Questions on Overseas Volunteering						
We're nearly done.						
24. Please indicate the extent, if any, to which your organisation believes that overseas volunteering enhances or facilitates the acquisition of the following skills (tick one box only in each case)						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working as part of a team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning and organising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem-solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Initiative and resourcefulness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility and adaptability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharpening one's skills in chosen career path	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching and training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Capacity building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tolerance and patience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intercultural awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stress management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Independence (self-confidence/sufficiency/resilience)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Active citizenship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campaigning/advocacy skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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**Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies
2012 Questionnaire**

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012			
25. Please indicate your organisation's views on how, if at all, the following issues may affect recruiting people in Ireland for overseas volunteering (tick one box only in each case)			
	Strongly discourages overseas volunteering	Slightly discourages overseas volunteering	Not an issue
Safety abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being away from home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Living in tough conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Risk of becoming ill	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited or no access to leisure or entertainment facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking time out from one's study/career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Living and working outside of one's comfort zone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial cost of overseas volunteering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Scepticism about the worth/value of overseas volunteering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Final Comments			
26. If you have any additional comments to make on overseas volunteering from Ireland, please use the space below			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>			
Thanks for taking the time to complete this survey			

Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 Questionnaire

Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012

The information you have provided will be really helpful to us in preparing the report and findings of this piece of research. We will keep you informed about how it is going, the outcomes, and our plans to publish and use the report in due course.

Thanks again for taking the time to fill in this survey.

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Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 Questionnaire

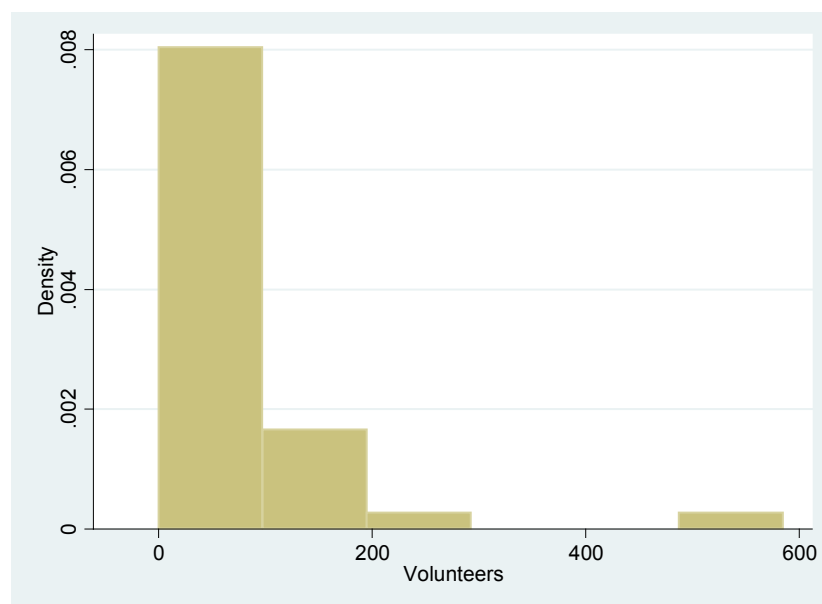
Table A1: Breakdown of Responses to the Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 by Question

Question No.	Topic	No. Respondents	No. Skipped	Response Rate (%)
1	Name of VSA (optional)	36	10	43%
2	Organisational Form of VSA	41	5	49%
3	Year VSA founded/established in Ireland	42	4	51%
4	General objectives of VSA	42	4	51%
5	Types of volunteering programme of VSA	41	5	49%
6	Total number of paid/salaried staff at VSA	42	4	51%
7	Funding sources for VSA	40	6	48%
8	Recipient countries of VSA volunteers	41	5	49%
9	Number of applicants to VSA in 2012	41	5	49%
10	Number of aspired overseas volunteers in 2012	33	13	40%
11	Interest in overseas volunteering during past 3-5 years	42	4	51%
12	Average fee charged per overseas volunteer	34	12	41%
13	Number of overseas volunteers in 2012 by gender	37	9	45%
14	Number of overseas volunteers in 2012 by age	35	11	42%
15	Number of overseas volunteers in 2012 by nationality	36	10	43%
16	Number of overseas volunteers in 2012 by place of residence	28	18	34%
17	Number of overseas volunteers in 2012 by duration of placement	34	12	41%
18	Estimate of average hours per week spent volunteering overseas in 2012	37	9	45%
19	Roles/activities in which overseas volunteers were most involved in 2012	36	10	43%
20	No. of overseas volunteers in 2012 by employment status before departure	34	12	41%
21	Approx. no. of overseas volunteers in 2012 by occupation	33	13	40%
22	Approx. no. of overseas volunteers in 2012 by prior experience of volunteering	34	12	41%
23	No. of overseas volunteers in 2012 by highest level of educational attainment	26	20	31%
24	Extent to which overseas volunteering enhances or facilitates skills	37	9	45%
25	Issues affecting recruitment of overseas volunteers in Ireland	37	9	45%
26	Open-ended comments	11	35	13%
Average (including Q26)		36	10	43%
Average (excluding Q26)		37	9	44%

Source: PMCA analysis of survey responses.

Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 Questionnaire

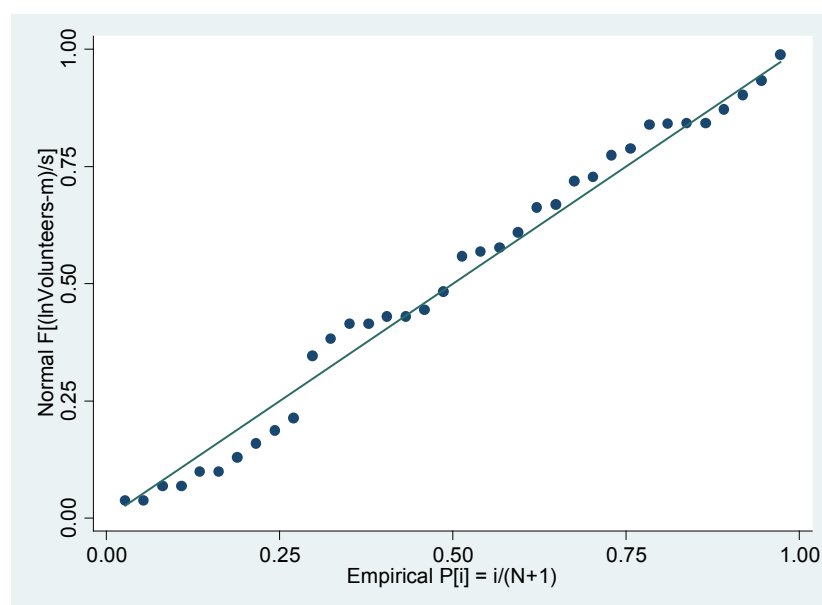
Figure A1: Frequency Distribution of Volunteer Sending Agencies by the Number of Overseas Volunteers in 2012



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 13.

Note: 37 VSAs answered this question and 9 skipped the question. Graphed using Stata/SE 12.1.

Figure A2: Normality Probability Plot of the Natural Logarithm of the Number of Overseas Volunteers in 2012 (Evidence of Lognormality)



Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 13.

Note: 37 VSAs answered this question and 9 skipped the question. Graphed using Stata/SE 12.1. Normality of the log number of overseas volunteers or lognormality of the number of overseas volunteers not rejected – skewness and kurtosis test of normality ($p=0.7436$); Shapiro-Wilk test ($p=0.56661$).

Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 Questionnaire

Table A2: Average Annual Earnings by Occupational Background (2011)

Occupational Background	Average Annual Earnings (€)
Financial, insurance and real estate	50,985
Information and communication	49,768
Public administration and defence	47,060
Education	44,606
Industry/manufacturing	41,832
Professional, scientific and technical	39,866
Human health and social work	37,277
Transportation and storage	37,049
Construction/building	35,611
Wholesale and retail trade (incl. repair of vehicles)	26,352
Administration and support services	25,303
Arts, entertainment, recreation and other service activities	23,404
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	17,771
Accommodation and food services	16,910
Student - in full-time education	0

Source: CSO 'Earnings and Labour Costs Annual Data 2011'; Teagasc 'National Farm Survey 2010' (used for the occupational category agricultural, forestry and fishing).

Note: Earnings are inclusive of overtime and irregular earnings. Student salary of €0 by assumption.

Table A3: Views of Volunteer Sending Agencies on the Extent to which Overseas Volunteering Facilitates or Enhances Skills – Number of Responses

Key Skills	Views of VSAs - No. Responses						Total
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A	
Leadership	12	22	3	0	0	0	37
Working as part of a team	24	12	1	0	0	0	37
Communications	16	17	4	0	0	0	37
Planning and organising	10	23	4	0	0	0	37
Problem-solving	9	24	2	1	0	0	36
Initiative and resourcefulness	15	18	3	0	0	1	37
Flexibility and adaptability	22	12	2	0	0	1	37
Foreign language	3	10	17	4	0	2	36
Sharpening one's skills in chosen career path	5	20	10	1	0	1	37
Teaching and training	13	18	5	0	0	1	37
Capacity building	10	20	6	0	0	1	37
Tolerance and patience	25	11	1	0	0	0	37
Intercultural awareness	28	7	2	0	0	0	37
Stress management	9	14	12	0	0	2	37
Independence (self-confidence/sufficiency/resilience)	18	17	1	0	0	0	36
Active citizenship	15	11	10	0	0	0	36
Campaigning/advocacy skills	7	16	12	1	0	1	37

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 24.

Note: 37 VSAs answered this question and 9 skipped the question.

Annex: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012 Questionnaire

Table A4: Views of Volunteer Sending Agencies on Issues Affecting the Recruitment of Overseas Volunteers in Ireland – Number of Responses

Issues	Views of VSAs - No. Responses			Total
	Strongly discourages overseas volunteering	Slightly discourages overseas volunteering	Not an issue	
Safety abroad	5	28	4	37
Being away from home	2	15	20	37
Living in tough conditions	1	23	12	36
Risk of becoming ill	2	27	8	37
Limited or no access to leisure or entertainment facilities	1	6	30	37
Taking time out from one's study/career	8	8	21	37
Living and working outside of one's comfort zone	2	18	17	37
Financial cost of overseas volunteering	17	16	4	37
Sceptism about the worth/value of overseas volunteering	3	21	13	37

Source: Comhlámh Survey of Volunteer Sending Agencies 2012. Response to Question 25.

Note: 37 VSAs answered this question and 9 skipped the question.



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