

A companion manual for working with returned development workers and volunteers



VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

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Introduction and Context:

This resource is aimed at volunteer sending agencies (VSAs) and any other organisations, groups, trainers or facilitators that work with volunteers who are travelling to or returning from placements in the global south.

It is part of an Erasmus+ funded project called 'Volunteering for the Future', which focuses on developing high quality learning opportunities that are tailored to organisations and volunteers that work or have worked in the global south. The project is a partnership between four organisations, from Czech Republic (INEX-SDA), Germany (finep), Ireland (Comhlámh) and the UK (Volunteering Matters), all of which have extensive experience of working on continuous engagement and active citizenship.

The 'Volunteering for the Future' project has developed a range of resources to help support organisations working with returned volunteers to engage them as active citizens:

Research

A piece of research has been developed that compiles learning and best practice from four countries on engaging returned volunteers in active citizenship. This is available at:

https://www.comhlamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Active-Citizen-Survey_Final.pdf

Pan-European Training Manual

A pan-European training manual has also been developed. This manual helps trainers bring volunteers through different learning stages with the aim of supporting them to become active citizens. It is divided into four stages:

- 1) Reflecting on their journey
- 2) Exploring global issues
- 3) Developing action projects
- 4) Consolidating their learning.

This manual can be found at https://issuu.com/comhlamh/docs/comhlamh_what_next_dec-2017.

National Training Manuals

Additionally, each organisation involved in this project localised the pan-European training manual to their own country contexts, all of which are available online:

Ireland: <https://www.comhlamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/What-Next-lowres.pdf>

United Kingdom: <https://volonteurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/UK-What-Next-manual-UK.pdf>

Czech Republic: <http://bit.ly/2jATFuA>

Germany: https://finep.org/media/methodenhandbuch_final_2017-06-23ls.pdf

The resource that you are reading aims to be a 'companion' to the above training manuals. The term 'companion' emerged through the process of creating the training manuals - a resource for trainers to explore what to consider when planning for and delivering the activities in the training manual, and to support and nurture a more critical pedagogy and practice.

Introduction for trainers

This training companion presents an invitation for practitioners to 'step out' of your practice to reflect upon and review what you are doing within your training with a view to 'stepping back in' equipped with a deeper sense of the complexities of training and the context within which you are working. In developing the resource, we have focused on examining how a truly critical learning process can be promoted with volunteers, with a view to digging deeper into your practice as trainers.

For those of you using this companion, we are making a few assumptions about who you are. We assume you have a level of experience in training and facilitation, as well as having an existing practice from which to reflect on, so we will not cover too many basics. We also assume that you already have experience in running some volunteering schemes, although they do not necessarily have to be international volunteering experiences. Throughout, the companion will pose questions on your practice, invite you to pause and reflect, and for this we invite you to choose a reflection method that best suits you. It could be journaling, a discussion within your organisation, or it could be making notes on this resource itself.

We hope that this resource will be a space for you to deepen your own professional expertise and broaden your perspectives, while gently being challenged as a trainer. We hope that the volunteers with whom you work will likewise be stimulated and challenged as you introduce topics and issues that might be unsettling, but which will enable them to grow in their own criticality, widen their perspectives and make the most of the overseas volunteering placement as an opportunity for a critical and transformational learning experience.

Why a 'Companion'?

As we were creating the various courses and resources for this project, we discovered that there was a stage before the delivery of the actual activities. We felt that while there was a lot of information on how to deliver the activities – brilliant methodologies, creative approaches, the steps and the delivery (what goes on 'externally' for the trainer) – there was not as much on the thinking behind the various activities and on what informs the approach used (what goes on 'internally' for trainers). We wanted to rewrite the 'What Next' toolkit to go into much more detail about the 'why'. However, we realised that it was not so much a deepening of these particular activities, it was more a deepening of practice we were looking for - an opportunity to go deeper in general and explore some critical issues in the actual space within which we conduct trainings with volunteers.

The Companion is divided into the following two sections, both of which aim to support trainers in their ongoing work on encouraging volunteers' active citizenship journeys:

- **Section 1:** reflection and critical examination of our contexts
- **Section 2:** embedding these reflections into practice

We realised that there was not always an understanding of certain terms ('global north' 'global south' 'developing' 'developed' etc.) and that we as trainers can use these terms without interrogating them ourselves. The language we use in our promotion, our trainings and our conversations is very important. This is especially important when talking about development. We will explore these terms in chapter 1.

If we are sending volunteers to the global south then we feel that it is vital we take into account the hegemonic, ethnocentric, historic and political contexts that we are working in. If we do not do this then we run the risk of reinforcing negative stereotypes and power dynamics. This is a missed

opportunity for ourselves as trainers not to take account of this context, and it is a huge missed opportunity for volunteers. We will draw awareness to the wider context of international volunteering in chapter 2.

We have found in the past that conversations around privilege and power dynamics within volunteering can be deeply uncomfortable. Why is this? What is it that is unsettling about interrogating such dynamics implicit in international volunteering? It could be that when we really dive into these issues, we find that those in the global north – the sending agencies, those with power – could actually be sustaining injustice, recreating prejudice and generally not challenging the bigger issues that we seek to tackle through our work globally. However, if we were to enter into these discussions, the very fabric of the work we do might have to change. If we want to offer volunteering as a meaningful and sustainable contribution to development then we need to courageously enter into these conversations. These issues will be addressed in chapters 3 and 4.

Building on this, Chapter 5 explores the movement from a soft to a more critical volunteering, drawing on the work of Andreotti (2006) who sees the importance of global citizenship education as moving 'beyond reform' for how injustices are sustained globally. The chapter will look at the role international volunteering can play within this to nurture critical, questioning and curious volunteers who can move towards a more complex and deeper experience as a result of a wider volunteer programme.

The final piece in this first section is a chapter that begins to make the connection between reflection and practice. Chapter 6 will use the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for volunteers to understand how priorities for development are realised, and relate their own activism and further engagement within this framework. There are many good ideas for how volunteers might get active in their home country and act on some of the goals they feel passionate about. By acting locally, inspired by their global experiences and informed by a common development framework, a feeling of solidarity and universalism can be nurtured.

Section 2 begins with an introduction to facilitation in chapter 7. While more experienced facilitators might be reading this, the chapter offers a really good foundation for planning and delivery of any session. This frames the rest of the section, promoting a 'learner-centred' approach throughout (explored in more detail in chapter 8), and how to manage group dynamics (chapter 9) and handle controversial issues (chapter 10) are built on the solid foundations laid in chapter 7.

We are excited about the possibilities of this resource. We are confident that it can trigger critical thinking that will be embedded into training and hope this can result in a deepened practice, a safe space to challenge volunteers, and a volunteer experience that is enriched by curiosity and questioning.

Section 1- Reflection on my practice

1. Understanding Terminologies and Language within Development

In this chapter we would like to invite you to reflect with your participants about the terms that we use to describe the world and the lives of other people, looking at the implications that can arise from this. Volunteers can have a deep sense of the inequalities that occur in society locally and globally, and we as facilitators want to strengthen the links between such inequalities and volunteers' roles as active citizens in their home country. This can involve providing knowledge about structural inequalities and reasons for poverty that are connected with our communities at home, and also involves reflecting on our position within these structures. Our use of language is intrinsically connected with reflection on our position.

Language is shaped by our view of the world but language also shapes our view of the world. This means that the words that exist in our vocabulary (and in our heads) are formed by the reality that surrounds us. They reflect the situations and things we know. However, words are also a toolbox for our thinking and sometimes there are things that we only become aware of if there are words to describe them. When we reflect on the words we use in describing other cultures and peoples, it tells us a lot about the history of our relations and also the current situation. It also reveals the values that are fundamental to relationships and interactions between people.

It can be very fruitful not only to interrogate the language that we use but, in doing so, to reflect with participants about what can change in our perception of the world when we change this or that term. The following is a list of common terms that are used in our line of work. We want to explore with you where they come from and how they can shape perceptions. After this, we will examine and suggest some alternative wording to use in our trainings.

Third world

Reflecting on the term 'third world' will lead the group on a journey back to the global power structures of the 20th century. The term 'third world' is a relic from the cold war between western countries (first world) and the socialist countries (second world). The world was dominated by these two major ideologies, and many economic, social and political developments were perceived through this lens. So those countries that were not part of one of the two big blocks were simply labelled as the 'third world'. The term became popular in 1955 with the Bandung conference of 29 states that were not aligned to either the western or socialist block. At this conference, the participating states opted to call themselves the third world. The initial understanding of the term very quickly changed meaning and became a synonym for economically poor countries.

Today there is a lot of criticism about the terms first, second and third world. This centres on the fact that the numerisation itself already assigns a lower value to the third world than to the first world. Additionally, the distinction is based on only one criterion, the political system, and does not look at the varying living conditions within the countries in question. Finally, aside from the fact that this was a very simplistic definition, the political systems have subsequently changed since the terms were first articulated. With the end of the cold war, the distinctions became even more superfluous as the 'second world' ceased to exist. For all of these reasons, even the organisations that initially introduced the terminology have since moved on from using it.

Fourth world

Another blind spot of the term 'third world' was that it divided the world into three parts, which focused on states and did not take into account the cultural and social diversity that exists within these states, for example, indigenous and aboriginal minorities, as well as nomadic, and hunter-gatherer societies. Groups such as the First Nations in America were frequently not acknowledged and ignored by both national and international laws. These groups are often referred to as the 'fourth world'. The term was introduced by Native American writer Shuswap Chief George Manuel in the 1970s and was quickly picked up by many other publications. As the term became more popular, it gathered a variety of other meanings along the way.

Today, 'fourth world' can also refer to the poorest of the poor, the most underprivileged members of human society in all countries, global north and global south. As a result, the term 'fourth world' also takes a look at poverty that exists in societies that are, overall, considered to be economically wealthy. By including the poor in these economically wealthy countries, the term opens up discussions about the distribution of resources with society, and asks about the standards of equality we want to achieve.

Developing countries

Another approach is to distinguish between developed countries and developing countries, as these definitions are still very present in state donors' official language. 'Developing countries' is a term widely used in media, publications and also by volunteers themselves. However, the term is also considered problematic by many people that are engaged in global education. This is because it implies that there are role models of development (the developed countries) and there are countries that have not yet succeeded at emulating their successes (the developing countries). The origin of these terms are the economic modernisation theories of the 1960s (e.g. by Walt Whitman Rostow), which tried to recreate the industrialisation of the 19th century in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The idea was to mechanise and rationalise agriculture, thereby freeing the workforce from the fields and making it available for paid work in industrial production in the cities. This would have resulted in the creation of a middle class, driving growing consumption and creating a demand for further industrial products that would stimulate more production and more jobs. However, political attempts to put these theories into practice failed widely, and instead created food insecurity, unemployment, slums and poverty, rather than industrial revolutions.

While the origins of the distinction between 'developed' and 'developing' are to be found in economic theories, the term 'developing country' was and still is used to describe the so-called lack of social and political structures in certain regions and countries. This definition implies that there is a deficit for the 'developing' part of the world and the 'developed' part serves as a role model. These terms imply that development is a one-way street and the goal is to become like western countries are today. This also suggests that development has a final destination and ending point that the developed countries have already reached. It ignores the fact that development is an ongoing process with no predefined direction or final aim. To distinguish between developed and developing countries pre-defines the relationship between both, suggesting that there is always one side that should learn from the other. In this logic, there is little or no space for thinking about the many ways that developed countries may learn from developing countries, or the possibility that so-called 'developed' countries may have a need for development themselves.

We feel that this kind of wording does not fit our work with volunteers. In our trainings, we want to keep an open mind about the fact that there are many ways of living and working together. We want to be critical about inequalities and unsustainable development both overseas and within our own countries. So what are the alternatives?

Global South and the Global North

These are possible alternatives when referring to global regions. The Global North is generally considered to be the USA, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, and South Korea. It generally also refers to Australia and New Zealand, even though these are in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Global South refers to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The term 'global south' is linked to postcolonial and transnational theory and the effort to articulate identities beyond 'third world' or 'developing' countries. The term emerged in the debates about post-colonialism in the 1970s. The term does not include a certain view of what development should be, nor does it compare economically poorer regions with richer regions. For all of these reasons, the term is used often also by stakeholders from the global south.

Majority World

Another approach is to use terms 'minority world' and 'majority world'. Looking at the world today, it becomes clear that a huge majority of the world's economic wealth is in the hand of a tiny minority of people, mostly but not only based in the economically richer countries. Additionally, the majority of publications and scientific research are produced by a minority of people in the economically richer countries. On the other hand, the majority of the world's population, mostly but not only in economically poorer countries, have significantly less access to basic goods like food, shelter, medical treatment, education and cultural rights. The term therefore looks at inequalities in the distribution of access and resources.

Poverty

Poverty may be the word most frequently used in trainings with volunteers. The term poverty can lead to many misunderstandings and misperceptions, e.g. it could foster discrimination or pity by characterising a person, community or country as poor per se. So how to avoid speaking about poverty in such a general way? This starts with an effort to grasp poverty in its many dimensions, which can help volunteers to reflect on their own experiences of each of these dimensions, as well as locate them within a bigger, global picture.

'Poverty isn't a trait, it's a life situation which depends on social and political conditions. Therefore, it's a context-dependent phenomenon that has different faces anywhere; it connects objective living conditions with subjective valuation.' (Nuscheler 2004, p. 144)

Millions of people around the world are affected by poverty and millions of people would probably perceive poverty in different ways. 'Absolute poverty' refers to the experience of someone not having their essential basic needs met because of lack of access to the necessary resources. People living in absolute poverty live under very difficult conditions characterised by many deprivations, e.g. malnutrition, lack of access to medical care, clean drinking water, sewerage and waste disposal and shelter. Globally, the number of poor people has declined, but as the UNDP Human Development Report (Sachs 2005, p. 34) shows, inequality has increased over the past decades.

If a plight doesn't seem to be temporary but determining the stage of life as a whole, the living condition is described as poverty, traditionally differentiating between absolute poverty and relative poverty.' (Springer Gabler Verlag, Armut, 2013)

'Relative poverty' refers to a person's limited life chances and access to resources by comparison with the general standards of the society in which they live. In Europe, this is defined as less than 60% of the average middle-income rate. Relative poverty is characterised by lack of access to good

medical care and education, lack of access to social advancement, and inability to afford leisure activities. Poverty is in this context an issue of inequality, making it difficult or impossible for those who are economically disadvantaged to participate in social life. Poverty also leads to inequalities in a range of areas such as education, leisure, and healthcare, which all influence a wider experience of wellbeing.

Subjective, or 'socio-cultural' poverty refers to an experience of feeling socially marginalised or discriminated against. It refers to the subjective perception of an affected person and affects anyone who, because of his or her life situation, regards themselves as poor or has a permanent fear of poverty. Political and cultural poverty refers to an experience of marginalisation arising from exclusion from political and cultural life. Someone experiencing political and cultural poverty may not feel that they have the opportunity to claim their rights, which has an influence on political will formation.

These examples of terminology show that language use can play a big part in better understanding the global issues that we discuss with volunteers. The opportunity arising from discussing and interrogating terms that we use to describe the world is that they lead to looking at the same world from different angles. As a result, new and different questions may arise in discussions with volunteers through the training space.

Deficit and asset language

'But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought.' — [George Orwell, 1984](#)

Terminology is one thing to consider when working with volunteers; the personal attitude underlying our language is another aspect that we would like to reflect on in this chapter. We are very aware that everything is a matter of perspective. Very often, the discussion about poverty and inequality around the world and at home is framed in a deficit-based perspective: we talk about what's missing, rather than about opportunities. While motivations for volunteering can emerge from such understandings of poverty (e.g. empathy with those that are facing difficult situations can help us to become active), our thinking should not stop there. There is an opportunity to go beyond simple solutions to perceived poverty and go more towards an approach that has confidence in the unknown, the uncertainty and complexity of development. When it comes to our engagement with volunteers, it is important to acknowledge what communities and countries are doing that is already working, and to acknowledge the short term nature of their engagement in a community that has a long term history and will continue well beyond their engagement.

Language has an impact on our emotions, and therefore on our general societal and social development. We shouldn't compare, we should understand. We shouldn't judge, but accept; and then we can overcome fear and grow. If we switch from deficit to asset language, we change perception; we put the positive aspects above the negatives, and therefore increase the chances of a better outcome for any situation. This does not mean that we should be wearing rose-tinted glasses and ignore reality, but if we try to look at a problem from a perspective of individual and collective strength rather than weakness, we might come up with more sustainable solutions for the problems that we face. The asset approach therefore comes along with a chance to discover new opportunities.

2. Colonialism, Complex Histories, and the Social, Political and Cultural Influences on Volunteering

This chapter looks at international volunteering in the context of colonialism and global interdependence. It also aims to raise questions for self-reflection for anyone who wants to volunteer or who has already volunteered overseas. Throughout Europe, there are more and more people who are interested in exploring the world, other cultures, and other societies, who have the resources to do so. This has led to increasing numbers of people choosing to do it via volunteering. Thus, international volunteering has become a professional sector, sometimes a business, as well as an area of concern for social and development studies. Although the focus of many volunteering programmes has roots in peace-building and community development, in recent years there have been trends emerging outside of this and a number of controversial issues have arisen from more commercial volunteering. Such issues around how international volunteering is framed and how it is being marketed are of concern for the international development sector in general.

Research has been published in the last decade about the positive effects international volunteering can have on the individual volunteer. The volunteering experience can help to develop a range of valuable personal skills, and also provide a good insight into issues of international development. The outcomes and impact of international volunteering on southern NGOs and communities are, however, far less researched. The research that does exist suggests that communities and organisations in the global south can have widely varied experiences of international development, from very positive to outright damaging, depending on a range of factors. We will discuss and explain all of these issues in this chapter, with the aim of identifying good practice in international volunteering programmes that can benefit the hosting community, the volunteer and the volunteers' home community.

Neo-colonialism

Notions of colonial racism and unequal power structures between the global north and the global south are often perpetuated by the international development sector. As Lough and Carter-Black (2015) argue, and as was discussed in Chapter One, using the terms 'developed' and 'developing' informs a view of development that represents countries in the global south as lacking in technologies, knowledge and resources, and incapable of catching up with 'modern' western societies without external help.

'But it's [colonialism's] most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world....To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others'. (Thiong'o 1986, p. 16)

This view of development, as well as the history of colonisation, has resulted in long-lasting, unequal power structures and what has been called a 'colonisation of the mind' (Thiong'o 1986, p. 16). This conflates racially-based associations of whiteness with progress, power and higher status. These socially inherited power structures can be extended from notions of ethnicity and race to economic, geographic and political relationships when we speak about the global south and the global north.

Who benefits from international volunteering?

The benefits of international volunteering have been rethought in recent years, alongside changes in the purpose of volunteering. As international volunteering was formerly understood as bringing

development to communities, those communities were defined as primary beneficiaries. In line with more recent thinking, the narrative has shifted towards the importance of intercultural learning and global education. This perspective acknowledges that benefits also arise for volunteers themselves (personal development, new competencies, broadening their minds and having their perspectives challenged), as well as for their sending communities, who can benefit from the new competencies of volunteers and learn about other cultures through their experiences.

The volunteer benefits from the process of finding and applying for an international volunteering placement, organising the administrative side of such a trip, arriving in an entirely new environment, living and working with people they have probably met for the first time, experiencing new cultures and customs and dealing with new kinds of problems mainly by themselves. This helps them develop a large set of skills and competencies, which are unique to the volunteering experience.

Volunteering and development education

Development education can add enormous value to international volunteering, particularly short term programmes. Upon return, volunteers can act as ambassadors for the organisations they worked with and use their experiences to promote development issues in wider society. In this way, volunteering can be a learning experience for the volunteers' home communities. However, in development education literature it is often emphasised that, depending on the training volunteers receive before, during and after their engagement, volunteering can result either in a more critical understanding of international development or in a reinforcement of the aforementioned colonial and imperialist stereotypes (Diprose 2012, Brown 2015) and "produce a 'geography' that perpetuates a simplistic ideal of development" (Simpson 2004, p. 682).

Unfortunately many volunteers are sent to their placements with little or no development education as part of the programme (through the training approach, the issues explored, the critical perspectives and the methodologies used). This is particularly true for commercial providers of 'gap year' volunteering, often referred to as volunteer tourism or voluntourism. Factors that can determine whether volunteers will engage with complex development issues during and after their placement can include: utilising a development education approach, having a structured and critical environment within the placement, and the previous education and character of the volunteer. This could also influence whether 'third world' stereotypes are merely confirmed (Jones 2005) or challenged. Hence, the key to a sustainable understanding of development in the context of volunteering relies on adequate training of the volunteer before, during and after their placement (Devereux 2008, Simpson 2004, Jones 2005).

Kate Simpson (2004) outlines guidelines she has termed 'social justice pedagogy'. According to this concept, development education for international volunteers should emphasise the interconnections between countries of the global north and the global south, and challenge the notion that these are completely separate entities. Poverty and underdevelopment should be taught as a consequence of complex international social, cultural and economic power relationships rather than simply a lack of income, infrastructure or job opportunities. During volunteer training it should be emphasised that 'the processes that allow young westerners to access the financial resources, and moral imperatives, necessary to travel and volunteer in a country in the global south, are the same as the ones that make the reverse process almost impossible. Similarly, the colonial legacy that provides a historical context and an inspiration for modern gap year projects, also carries with it issues of power' (Simpson 2004, p.690).

International volunteering may contribute to the reproduction of power structures at the micro level, as it mainly involves white volunteers from the global north going to the global south with the intention to help. Omar Agbangba, (2018), a sociologist from Togo, argues '*how can we talk about*

inclusive development if we start on unequal footing in training and opportunities for young people in the North and South?’ He argues that there is a need for reciprocity in volunteering programmes. ‘that reciprocity restores justice and fairness to young people in the South: if young westerners are to come to Africa unrestricted for volunteering, young Southerners too must have the opportunity to volunteer in the North without hindrances’.

Without this element of reciprocity in our programmes, we risk only replicating unconscious expressions of western superiority, the notion that countries in the global south are unable to develop their own capacities and hence need to be developed from the outside by western intervention. Especially when unskilled volunteers do this ‘development’, it marks these countries as inherently inferior and justifies the asymmetric power relationships between the global north and south (Perold et al, 2013). It also masks the causal relationships between widespread poverty and underdevelopment in the south and the abundance of wealth in the north.

The impact of international volunteering on local NGOs and communities

What impact does the work of northern volunteers have on the local communities they visit? Can international volunteering also be a learning experience for hosting communities? In comparison to research on the impact of international placements on volunteers, the amount of research undertaken about this topic is surprisingly little. This is partially due to the fact that the tangible impact of volunteering on communities is hard to measure as it is dispersed and often only becomes clear long after the volunteering mission has taken place. Different surveys have reported a variety of benefits for local people working with volunteers (Lough 2014). Firstly, in terms of human capital, southern NGO staff have reported on the new skills (often ICT), new energy and enthusiasm and most importantly cross cultural experience they acquired whilst working with international volunteers (Heron 2011, Perold et al, 2013).

There are generally two types of placements: short term and long term. Short term placements are generally considered to be those of less than eight weeks. One criticism of short term placements is that often, because of the short time frame, positive outcomes are surpassed by practical problems and negative consequences for local NGOs and communities. Furthermore, a number of wider problems for international development can be created or intensified by both short- and long-term international volunteering. These can include reproducing existing stereotypes.

International volunteers’ perceptions of hosting organisations or communities may be distorted by stereotypes that the community is poor, and that people dependent on help from outside. As such, even a basic knowledge of English teaching, or of other competencies, can be seen as sufficient for doing an important job in the community. It is easy for this perspective to be reinforced, rather than undertaking the more complex, critical task of linking prevailing conditions with the historical and current injustices of colonialism, the structures of global economy, and the impact of international aid.

While his overall evaluation of international volunteering is quite positive, Peter Devereux (2008, p.358) does acknowledge that *‘at its worst, international volunteering can be imperialist, paternalistic charity, volunteer tourism, or a self-serving quest for career and personal development on the part of well-off Westerners’* If volunteers are not sensitised to the underlying causes of poverty in the specific local circumstances of their placement, they are at risk of understanding poverty as a local phenomenon specific to the global south rather than recognising that the same mechanisms cause hardship for many people in global north: *‘Poverty becomes an issue for “out*

there”, which can be passively gazed upon, rather than actively interacted with’ (Simpson 2004, p. 688).

These difficult notions around international volunteering tend to reinforce themselves in wider society in the global north. Simpson (2004) explains the fact that through uninformed international volunteering, this simplistic idea of development and poverty is manifested in society, which in turn legitimises sending young unskilled labour on short term missions as means of development. Thus, a vicious cycle is created that promotes a false stereotype that global poverty is a phenomenon far away and detached from our everyday lives, while in fact, especially through ever accelerating globalisation, livelihoods across the globe are interlinked in a complex manner.

Taken to extremes, there are documented cases of how the voluntourism industry has had negative effects on local communities. For example, Carpenter (2015) focuses on orphanage voluntourism in Cambodia. The number of mostly western, relatively rich, volunteers coming to play with children in institutional care may potentially encourage the proliferation of new orphanages and undermine Cambodian families, with parents renting their children out for a day to play with travellers for money (Stupart 2013). Studies have indicated the negative aspects of the short-term attachments of children to ever-changing volunteers, either in orphanages or in schools, noting how this can affect their behaviour. A further issue of concern is the fact that volunteers are not always screened and selected for the given work, which raises serious child protection issues, not to mention that the host organisation is often only marginally, if at all, involved in the actual volunteers’ selection (Stupart 2013). This has become such an issue of concern that networks such as Better Volunteering, Better Care have been established with the aim of completely discouraging international volunteering in residential care centres. In 2018, the Australian Parliament recognised orphanage trafficking as a form of modern slavery, giving formal recognition to the fact that volunteering in orphanages can contribute to child trafficking.

It’s not only programmes that work with children in orphanages that can have negative effects on local communities. Other activities fraught with ethical concerns include: building a community garden, painting a school or constructing a path. Would it not be undertaken without the participation of international volunteers, or, on the contrary, would it be executed by local artists, architects or builders who would earn money for their living?

What are the benefits?

Despite these issues, international volunteering also has many benefits for both host organisations and communities. These include the development of social capital, intercultural learning, and the acquisition of human resources at low cost. Volunteers are generally seen to be proactive and creative within the limited resources available to them. They can contribute to the strategic development of the host organisation. Another enabling condition is when communities are consulted about volunteers’ presence and the work they will be undertaking, prior to organising a placement. And, as outlined extensively in the previous sections, it is also important that volunteers are aware of their own position in global society and the broader historical, geographical and social context into which they’re entering when they start a placement. When they have a greater understanding of the potential impact and drawbacks of their activities, as well as the potential benefits, they can become more interested in the local culture and individual people they meet along their journey.

However, arguably the most significant and sustainable part of volunteering overseas is when the volunteer returns home. Once back home, they can advocate for the interests of host communities and work against the prevailing power inequalities between the global north and the global south, as well as within their own societies which are often the product of the same global forces. Therefore,

international volunteering has the potential to generate an ongoing range of benefits for all stakeholders, which are most likely to be achieved when there are equal partnerships between sending organisations, hosting organisations, and the volunteers and community members involved.

3. Exploring Values and Frames within International Volunteering

What informs the motivations of someone deciding to engage with an international voluntary experience? What are the values of these individuals as well as the wider societal values that have informed these motivations? This chapter will explore values and frames in the context of international volunteering and in particular, create an opportunity for the international volunteering sector to consider which values we promote in our work. Building on the previous chapters, the chapter will look at how certain assumptions and frames within international volunteering, if left unchallenged, can impact negatively on the work and on relationships with communities in the global south.

Darnton and Kirk (2011) argue that values are one of the most neglected and yet important factors in bringing about positive change. They define values as the guiding principles that individuals use to judge situations and determine their course of action: by examining these values more closely, we have a much better chance of bringing about meaningful positive change. According to Darnton and Kirk, as well as influencing our behaviours and attitudes, values are connected to the way we understand and interpret the world: *'Values are seen to be at the root of our motivational system: they are the guiding principles by which we act, and by which we evaluate both our own actions and those of others'* (2011). The authors examined the psychological basis of values theory and motivational goals, trying to identify which are most active in driving public engagement with development. This led them to identify a number of values around universalism as key to driving engagement with 'bigger than self' problems, including development issues.

Values, in turn, create what Darnton and Kirk call 'frames', defined as the chunks of factual and procedural knowledge in the mind with which we understand situations, ideas and discourses in everyday life, and which can result in potential blind spots.

How do we promote values in our work?

When we communicate with our volunteers, when we market and promote our programmes, and in all of our external communication, e.g. through social media and other online spaces, we are giving out messages that are promoting certain values. It is therefore important, when we are communicating with volunteers and the public, that we are engaging with the values that we want to encourage and grow. Research by Murphy (2014) on the Irish NGO sector found that many NGOs talk about 'equality' but in their external communication actually strengthen values that are the opposite of this and that reinforce paternalistic, patronising and simplistic messages about development (e.g. overuse of images of women with children and women working in the fields).

An example of this is what has been called the 'Live Aid' legacy. Effectively, this fundraising initiative created a picture of the public in the global north as powerful givers, with the public in African countries being cast as grateful receivers. It reinforced an idea of mass poverty as 'inevitable' and 'unchanging' for people in countries in the global south, inferring that this is their own fault. It did not take into account the complex nature of development and underlying structural factors such as exploitation and colonialism, which were discussed in the previous chapter. The term 'charity' itself can tend to reinforce, normalise and legitimise this unequal power relationship.

The motivation 'to help' has emerged as one of the main reasons why people in the global north choose to volunteer, based on a deficit-based and charitable perception of development and subsequent need for international volunteering. While this is a motivation coming out of good intentions, in many instances the action of helping already implies a position of power for the person

offering the help. Who decides? Is the help requested, or imposed? How these dynamics play out in 'the field' while overseas can have implications for maintaining unequal power structures between people in the global north and global south.

Darnton and Kirk further explore the implications of how values are activated and reinforced in their work around 'surface' and 'deep' frames. Surface frames are the words, phrases and stories that NGOs use to talk about development aid and charity. These are intended to activate deep frames, which they define as world views. Following an analysis of how the development sector communicates with the public, they found that, in general, this is problematic: the surface words commonly used tend to activate deep frames that can be considered negative and detrimental to the people the NGO declares to support.

Examples of some problematic surface frames are:

- Help the Poor frame – This emphasises the image of rich people giving and poor people receiving
- Giving Aid frame – To end poverty, people should give money from wealthy countries to poorer ones
- Charity frame – This reinforces the image of NGOs being an instrument that allows privileged people to share wealth those less fortunate.

Examples of the deeper frames with which these messages can be linked include:

- The Rational Actor Frame, which asserts a world filled with individuals who make self-directed choices. This has been the foundation of many institutions, including banks, the marketing industry and education. As NGOs become increasingly a big business venture to fundraise and promote a brand image, they can become embedded in this frame.
 - The Free Market Frame, which presumes that the world is filled with individuals seeking to maximise their self-interest. Wealth is created through the industrious efforts of these individuals, whose personal freedoms combine with self-discipline to make them more competitive. This presumed industriousness makes them deserving of the wealth they acquire.
- In other cases, NGO communications can also activate surface frames that are considered more positive in terms of bringing about long-term change:

- International Solidarity frame – The idea that we are all in this together: what affects one of us will affect us all.
- Social Responsibility frame – We have a collective responsibility to make society better
- Activist frame – This is when a person engaged by the NGO is seen as one to be 'activated' around a particular issue or campaign

Some examples of the deeper frames underlying these values include:

- The Non-hierarchical Frame, which can be defined within the NGO sector as development programmes built around structures that are 'not premised on up or down, or higher and lower';
- The Participatory Democracy Frame, which is grounded in a basic belief that people are capable of governing themselves. While experts are needed to provide essential counsel, it is the people themselves who should be empowered to set their own trajectory.

Transactional active citizenship versus continuous engagement active citizenship

Darnton and Kirk's work recognises the frames of individualism and consumerism that are currently

dominant within our society. These can be linked to the 'Transaction' frame, which places emphasis on the exchange of goods or services between individuals, commonly in the context of an economic exchange. Depending on how volunteer placements are conceptualised and structured, it is possible to see how they could promote a model of 'transactional' active citizenship. For example, a volunteer could be encouraged to see their placement from an isolated and decontextualised perspective: the experience of volunteering in another country and culture is a unique, discrete experience that is like a payment for the volunteer's services. This approach does not allow for the possibility of co-creating and sharing learning reciprocally, and limits what the volunteer brings back to their community in terms of learning.

However, in understanding more and by being aware of such frames in international volunteering programmes, this also presents an opportunity to raise awareness of - and even challenge - society's dominant frames. How can programmes be delivered in a way that supports universalism, global justice and active citizenship, moving from the individual to the collective?

There is a huge opportunity for learning here from the societies in the global south to which volunteers travel in terms of ways of being in the world that are more communal, collective and social than where volunteers may have come from in the first place. What possibilities come from the opportunity of spending time in a culture with different dominant frames and values than our own culture? Will we ignore this and try to impose a western model of development, or is there a chance to pause, listen, observe and learn from a completely different way of being and turn a helping motivation on its head to find out what we can really learn for the integrity and benefit of our common humanity?

Values and the international volunteering sector

These questions raise important issues for the international volunteer sector to consider. We suggest that it is informative for people working in the sector to examine the wide range of values influencing people's motivations to volunteer, and to examine how these can be reinforced or challenged throughout a volunteer placement. The role of the facilitator is critical in preparing volunteers to be open to mutual learning, sharing and deepening understanding with colleagues in the community they will travel too. The facilitator can also create the conditions whereby volunteers can understand white privilege and issues of power that can undermine the very reasons for why the programme exists in the first place, and take this awareness into their placement in how they engage with an openness and willingness to learn.

We have identified some challenging questions for facilitators working with international volunteers to consider. There are no straightforward answers to these questions, but they will hopefully be of use in helping to clearly identify the values that facilitators are promoting through the training, and to be able to consistently communicate these.

- 1) What are the expectations linked to values and motivations and is it ok to challenge these expectations through the training? For example, "I want to change the world", "I'm responding to a religious motivation", "I want to broaden my mind and experience different cultures"?
- 2) How could certain motivations impact on how people engage with the host community? Common motivations for volunteering range from the wish to pass on skills, to the wish to help people, to the wish for a change of scenery and lifestyle. How might these be manifested in volunteers' perceptions and attitudes towards those they will be working with and how can space be created in trainings to explore this?
- 3) How can we identify those values that we do not want to nurture with volunteers? For example,

if volunteering is seen as a means of gaining 'social recognition' this is not a value you want to promote; does there need to be a conversation with volunteers during the training about what image of volunteering they will communicate about their overseas experience?

To conclude, this reflection on values and frames has mostly been situated within the space of the workshop and training room. A further challenge is to recognise any contradictions between opposing values and frames co-existing within the wider organisation. This can be particularly evident within organisations that have a strong fundraising dimension that relies on activating some of the 'surface frames' discussed above (giving aid, charity) as well as a focus on development education and global learning (non-hierarchical, participatory democracy). Promoting positive values in the training space can be the starting point for them to cascade throughout the organisation so that values are visible, aligned and streamlined. The transformative potential of international volunteering can be an opportunity to interrogate our society's values - particularly those values that promote self-enhancement - and rebalance this through a stronger, more explicit and active focus on values that promote self-transcendence.

4. Power Dynamics within International Volunteering

'International aid and humanitarian workers can and very often do exercise a position of power within the communities where they work. They frequently work in a context where their position of authority and control of resources can convey a sense of superiority. Combined with a post-crisis scenario, this power can be further heightened as a result of the trauma and vulnerability communities are experiencing. Any abuse of this power directly contradicts the spirit of true internationalism and completely undermines a rights-based approach to development.'

(Comhlámh 2018)

At the beginning of 2018, the international development and aid sector entered a time of crisis, as allegations about the behaviour of some Oxfam UK employees in post-earthquake Haiti received widespread media coverage. The quote above is in direct reference to this, and it outlines the urgent and enormously important work that needs to be done to tackle the issue of power dynamics within volunteering programmes. This chapter aims to explore how we can firstly recognise such dynamics and subsequently rise to the challenge of interrogating the complex landscape that has led to global injustice and inequality at a micro as well as a macro level. The issues might be historic but they are often also mirrored in real life. It is really important through all of this to consider the impact on host communities and how the actions, approaches and perspectives of volunteers from the global north might have a negative effect on communities in the global south. Volunteering programmes and the wider international development sector have the potential to be complicit in sustaining such power dynamics - or can also be in a position to begin to turn this around.

We should be cautious in all of this not to make volunteers or those of us working in this area to feel guilty for their privilege – this could result in volunteers feeling the need to justify that what they are doing is good, affirm their own benevolence and create a denial of any complicity in such issues. This is often a difficult conversation for volunteers to manage, as there is already suspicion about charities at the moment, and the rise of voluntourism has had an impact on how people view all international volunteering. So already our volunteers might be starting from a place of defence that what they are doing is good and justified. This is why it is so important to be gentle in raising this conversation, so that we can courageously bring volunteers with us on a journey towards a more critical view of international volunteering and their participation in it.

These conversations can be difficult and even uncomfortable. We are not traditionally used to critically reflecting on our own power and privilege particularly if, historically, we have been the oppressors; or that the risk of questioning our power might lead to us needing to change something about how we operate. This is the challenge we invite you to embrace, with the hope that some of these conversations might reach your volunteers and, indeed, impact on your volunteering programmes.

"I thought I knew what was best and, dammit, I was there to help. Everybody should get out of the way and allow me to do that. I was imposing my world view on the situation and not listening to the people I was working with and for. The words 'arrogance' and 'white saviour' probably come to mind, perhaps with a few others. You'd be right. I had abused my position to force my opinion on to a situation. It didn't matter if I was right or wrong; it wasn't my call".

(Volunteer coordinator at London School of Economics, 2016)

Volunteers from the global north can be given positions of power and responsibility simply because of where they come from in the world (Comhlámh, 2007). This might be as a result of the host community not having resources to finance the salary of someone locally to do the same job, it

might have been based on a perception from either the sending agency or the host community that the volunteer is more 'honest', or it might be because they have access to funds (Comhlámh, 2007). In order to go beyond a simplistic analysis of this, we would like to explore reframing this within a global citizenship approach. What we mean by this is to begin with an acknowledgement of the transformation that can take place if volunteers from the global north are open to the learning from peers and counterparts in the south. A global citizenship approach will go beyond a limited frame of 'us' and 'them' and instead recognise the wider context of a shared participation in the complexity of issues that are at play.

Comhlámh (2007) stated how it is important to challenge assumptions, and the status quo in our volunteering work, and instead encourage solidarity between the peoples of the world in order to achieve justice, equality and human rights - in a word, development - for all.

In recent years, an increasing focus has been placed on the concept of reciprocity and its fundamental role in international volunteering. As noted by Lough (2016), the very concept of aid implies a relationship of giver and receiver, resulting in implicitly asymmetrical relationships with embedded concepts of patronage, power and inequality. Achieving full reciprocity is demanding, but, as Lough highlights, 'programmes that prioritize mutual exchange between Southern and Northern partners can overcome many of the complications inherent in conventional aid relationships'.

When we talk about a global citizenship approach, we are therefore calling for a renewed narrative, one that is always being shaped and changed and one that has less of a focus on separating peoples of the world and more of a focus on 'us' – all of us – and keeping our sights on the unequal forces that are aggravating poverty and injustice and what all of us can do to challenge this. The privilege of being able to participate in a volunteer programme, or indeed any space that brings people from across the world and from differing perspectives together, is that it mixes up a single dominant narrative and creates the opportunity for a new conversation to emerge. This will, however, still rely on an awareness of the potential imbalance of participation and dominant voices when a range of people get together.

Participation in an international volunteering experience is wrapped up in wider forces and dynamics beyond volunteers' control. However, they are entirely a part of this and have the agency to shape as well use these perspectives as inquiry points for personal and collective reflection. When we really dive into these issues we can find that volunteers and volunteering programmes could actually be complicit in sustaining the very poverty and injustice that we are seeking to challenge through our work. This is an uncomfortable truth. If we were to courageously enter into these discussions, the very fabric of the work we do might have to change if we want to offer volunteering in a meaningful and sustainable fashion. However, if we can have confidence to be open to uncertainty, it can be enriching for everyone involved. The possibilities for action on return can be meaningful, critical and with a long lasting impact on individuals, as well as the bigger picture of challenging the forces in the world today that are sustaining injustice.

"At its heart, the work should be about solidarity and the interdependence between the global south and global north. For international development and humanitarian workers to take their responsibilities to heart, they need to continually question their own practice and ensure that they're not perpetuating exploitative, colonial histories and taking advantage of vulnerable communities."
(Comhlámh, 2018)

5. Moving Towards a More Reflexive Volunteering

Why do we send international volunteers? This may seem like an obvious question but it is one worth reflecting on. If it is about helping people see the world then why do we not work in the tourism industry? Is this a good thing to do? Would it be better to send learners, people who can open their minds to a different way of seeing the world and use this to create change when they return to their home communities? Whatever we call people, it is important that we work with them in a way that deepens and broadens their existing ways of seeing the world, allowing them to better understand the complexities of the issues, and the power imbalances and structures that allow them to continue.

Andreotti (2006, 2012) has written extensively on this, investigating how we can explore these topics. Her approach is based on critical literacy, the premise that all knowledge is partial and incomplete, constructed within our contexts, cultures and experiences. Therefore, we need to engage with our own and other perspectives to learn and transform our views, identities and relationships.

Given the issues raised in previous chapters, it is important that we provide the space for volunteers to reflect on the context of their placements and their own and others' assumptions. This includes examining how we came to think/be/feel/act the way we do and the implications of our systems of belief in relation to power, social relationships and the distribution of labour and resources. By doing so, we can better place our work in a framework that enables criticality through a safe space. Andreotti examines global citizenship education from soft to more critical approaches, ultimately calling for a more reflexive approach to be used, moving beyond 'making the world a little better' towards an approach that involves 'walking with others into the possibility of new worlds'. It is this reflexive approach that we want to explore in this chapter.

Volunteering experience as a learning journey

If we want our programmes to move towards a more critical and reflexive approach, then it is important to see the volunteering experience as a learning journey. We have divided the volunteering learning journey into three parts: pre-departure training, the overseas experience, and post-return training.

Pre-departure training should prepare volunteers for going overseas, but it also offers a great opportunity to begin to open up the questions that are being explored in this manual. There are multiple reasons for this: the training can begin to challenge the stereotypes and blind spots that volunteers may have about the country they are travelling to; it can begin to look at alternative views of development; and can also begin to get volunteers to ask questions about why the world is the way it is. It has been found in previous research by Comhlamh (2009) that people are more likely to engage on return if they have made the decision to do so before going overseas. This illustrates the importance of framing a volunteer experience as a learning journey, and not just as an overseas experience. This would result in the reframing of the volunteer continuum as a development education programme: development education would therefore be a continual part of the programme, rather than an add-on within the return phase.

The focus on development education could also be mainstreamed into the overseas part of the volunteer programme by running development education trainings while the volunteers are on placement. Ideally, the placement will be developed and run in collaboration with local NGOs and local groups so that there can be a sharing of learning and perspectives, in a sense of solidarity.

The issue of bilateral reciprocity, which we touched on in previous chapters, should also be considered. If we want real and genuine solidarity, then surely programmes should incorporate a reciprocal volunteering dimension? How can there be genuine partnership and solidarity if the exchange is only one-way? Of course, systemic issues such as economics and visas may be outside of our direct control. However, there are a range of programmes using this model despite the structural barriers that exist, so it is always worth considering ways in which this could be built into programmes from the outset.

After the volunteers have returned from placement, supports such as debriefing and signposting to next steps are vital. Debriefing helps the returned volunteer make sense of their experience. It can also smoothen the transition home and minimise any challenges that a volunteer may experience on returning home. The debriefing process as well as other return supports helps volunteers to make sense of their learning and find ways to integrate it into their lives. This can include signposting them to opportunities or groups that are involved in interesting activism, which can be critical to ensure the volunteers' continuous engagement. The 'What Next' training manuals, which were developed as part of this Erasmus+ programme, offer very practical support to organisations on how they can do this including with localised resources that are relevant to the country contexts in Czech Rep, Germany, Ireland and the UK.

Moving towards a more reflexive volunteering in practical terms

The steps outlined in Comhlámh et al 'From Volunteers to Active Citizens' resource (2015) are a useful starting point in helping us to conceptualise how we can move our programmes towards a more reflexive volunteering. Andreotti argues for use of the term "self-reflexivity" as opposed to reflection. A reflective volunteer thinks about their own individual journey, assumptions and decisions. They are continually tracing individual assumptions to collective socially, culturally and historically situated "stories" (e.g. development, colonialism), and finding a way through these.

Based on your experiences, what impact might moving between these stages have on your volunteer programmes? What might the next steps look like within the context of your work? The following table above draws heavily on Andreotti's work, specifically including her article entitled 'Soft versus critical global citizenship education' (2006, pp 40-51).

	VOLUNTEERING	REFLEXIVE VOLUNTEERING
Pre-departure training	Focus on fundraising, the task, safety, limited time invested, preparation for 'another culture', do's and don'ts (around health, safety, images and messages, cultural etiquette, dealing with 'difficult' situations) Empowering individuals to act (or become active citizens) according to what has been defined for them as a good life or ideal world	Exploration of what 'culture' means in own context and its links to identity and power; exploration of images and messages from post-colonial perspective; preparation for navigating and learning from difference Empowering individuals to reflect critically on the legacies and processes of their cultures, to imagine different futures and to take responsibility for decisions and actions

Purpose of volunteering – grounds for acting	Charity model; generate income for projects overseas; help in places where there is a perceived lack of 'development', resources, skills, technology etc...; grounds for acting are humanitarian / moral	Justice model; solidarity; grounds for acting are political/ ethical
Role of volunteers	Transfer of knowledge; provision of goods or services; being good/sharing; responsibility FOR the other (or to teach or build the capacity of the other); part of the solution - to create pressure to change structures	Wider responsibility as a global citizen; to learn other ways of thinking about development; responsibility toward the other and to learn with the other; 'accountability'; understanding and recognising that we are all part of the problem and all part of the solution
Perspectives on culture	We are all equally interconnected, we all want the same thing; acknowledge other cultures but deep down, own culture is right, and universal	Understand unequal power relations; able to see own culture in context; having a 'feel' for how cultural differences operate <i>in general</i> ; able to understand people as products of different histories, expressions of different circumstances and desires
Perspectives on what needs to change	Institutions and individuals that are a barrier to development	Structures and systems but also assumptions (especially Northern and Southern elites imposing own assumptions as universal), cultures, relationships
Perception of communities in global south	Thinking about a community somewhere as a homogenous whole; Seeing 'lack of' rather than 'abundance of'	Thinking about a community as a complex and heterogeneous social field; recognising agency of people within communities; acknowledgement of shared humanity in context of unequal world
What next' after volunteering?	Fundraising for sending organisation; sending money to a project directly; raising awareness of global issues and promoting campaigns; lifestyle changes (consumption patterns)	Drawing on experiences to better analyse own position/context; participating in transforming structures, assumptions, attitudes and power relations in own contexts; promoting engagement with global issues and perspectives; pursuing actions based on an understanding of interdependence

HEADS UP

EarthCARE Global Justice (2017) offers another useful tool to reflect on our practice. The HEADS UP model below is a suggested tool to help us reflect on our practice and programs. It aims to support

us to reflect on the explicit and implicit messaging and work that we do with our volunteers. In this way, it enables the design of deep learning processes that can support learners, volunteers and organisations to relate and work together differently, in order to alleviate the effects and transform root causes of unprecedented global challenges. The HEADS UP checklist was developed by Andreotti (2012), and we have adapted it for the context of volunteer sending agencies.

Hegemony (the belief or the assumption that one group or state is better or more dominant than another).

Are there any inappropriate assumptions in our trainings that western volunteers know more than the local people do? This could be the volunteer going to 'help', perhaps by building houses or working in an orphanage. Does it assume that this transfer of skills and knowledge is one way, i.e. the northern volunteers give and the southern communities receive? Is this view accurate or should it be challenged?

Question: How might we develop our programmes with a focus more on learning, partnership and solidarity?

Ethnocentrism (projecting the views of one group as universal)

This is where we judge other cultures solely by our own cultural conditioning, engaging our own western-conditioned viewpoint. This can be overt, or happen in a more subtle form. It can be the assumption that our culture and way of seeing the world is superior and correct: this can be at a subconscious level and will need a lot of unpacking.

Question: Does our development education training support participants to develop an understanding of 'culture' as something that is socially constructed and complex? If volunteers can develop a more complex understanding of their own culture and their relationship to it then they will be able to meet diverse cultures in a different way.

Ahistoricism (forgetting historical legacies and complicities)

This is when our programmes do not take into account or acknowledge the historical contexts that have created the current realities for communities and countries. The way we are living today is built on the structures developed by previous generations, e.g. colonialism, exploitation, etc. from which we often still benefit.

Question: Do our programmes explore the different factors that have contributed to the current development context, including conflict, colonialism, unfair trade deals and other forms of exploitation? Do they explore how we in the global north are complicit in the exploitation of the countries we are working in?

Depoliticisation (disregarding power inequalities and ideological roots of analyses and proposals)

This is when the political nature of programmes' contexts and power imbalances are ignored or not taken into account. This can include gender, ethnicity, economic class, perceived authority because the volunteer is seen as coming from Europe. If we can tune in to this in our own lives and contexts, we are more likely to be aware of the issues when away. Do our trainings explore the power relations in the communities that we send volunteers to?

Question: Do our programmes explore such issues as power and privilege, including an understanding and awareness of power in our own lives?

Self-congratulatory and self-serving attitude (oriented towards self-affirmation /CV building)

What are the motivations of both the volunteers and the sending organisation? Are they aimed at building relationships in genuine solidarity? Are they going to help, fix or make a difference or are they going to learn grow in a mutual solidarity? As Lilly Watson, an aboriginal Australian activist said *"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together"*

Question: Do our trainings challenge our own and our volunteers' motivations?

Un-complicated solutions (ignoring the complexity of epistemological, ontological and metaphysical dominance)

Do our trainings explore the root causes of development issues and how we are both part of the problem and part of the solution at the same time? Does it allow space for volunteers to sit with the discomfort of contradictions and complexities, e.g., we want to create a fairer, more equal world, but we also benefit from the structures that create poverty in other parts of society.

Question: Do our programmes offer simple solutions to complex problems or do they explore the issues and solutions in a critical and in-depth manner?

Paternalism (seeking affirmation of superiority through the provision of help)

Do our programmes portray the people we work with as lacking something that our volunteers need to bring them, e.g. education, resources or civilisation? Do we expect the communities that we are working for to gratefully accept our help without question? Do we accept the local communities' legitimate right to want to implement a different solution?

Question: Do our trainings implicitly imply or assume the superiority of our volunteers and our work to the communities we are working in?

What would the world look like if all volunteers went as learners with a genuine sense of solidarity? That they are ready to be taught by their host communities about alternatives ways of development? If that learning explored the complexities and the root causes of global issues and then encouraged the learner to return to their home communities and continue their engagement? If they returned home as active global citizens, capable of critically reflecting and questioning on development issues at a local and a global level? What would be the potential impact on development, on society at home, on the individual volunteers' lives?

6. The Potential of the Sustainable Development Goals for Volunteers

In this chapter we will change the focus a little. We would like to explore the potential of integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a topic with returning volunteers. Why and how are they relevant to our work with volunteers in our trainings? What can we contribute to the achievement of the goals, and how can they contribute to our work with volunteers? And how can we include the SDGs in a way that volunteers can critically engage with them rather than just take them as a panacea for development?

The SDGs are a set of 17 individual goals that seek to address a wide variety of development issues, and which UN member states are expected to use to frame their development agendas. The SDGs form a global framework with the aim of sustainably making the world a better place. Rather than being a development framework that is situated only in certain parts of the world, the goals acknowledge that there is a need to address problems in the global north as well as in the global south. The SDGs can therefore be a way for volunteers to act as multipliers for global justice beyond their participation in the overseas placement by identifying what actions need to happen locally in their own country.

The SDGs are complex and cover a wide spectrum of issues around the world and will require commitment and time to work towards achieving them. Using the SDGs might help volunteers to see how one development framework has attempted to include many of the big development issues of this time. It would be useful to know what development frameworks have gone before (e.g. Millennium Development Goals, Poverty Reduction Strategy, etc.) - including the limitations and successes of previous initiatives in order to get a more informed, contextualised and critical insight into this current framework.

Once we are not just taking the SDGs at face value but with a critical perspective, there is opportunity to explore the role that volunteers can play in working towards their achievement? When returnees arrive back home after their volunteer project work is finished, they are often motivated to make a change, to have an impact on how things work at home. It is important as a trainer to support the ideas that returnees come up with, to link them in with what is already happening that they could add value to at home. Adding value and bringing their experiences to an existing initiative can be worthwhile since there may already be an established structure that will help people to channel their energy and time effectively. This way, returnees do not have to start from scratch, but can work with others towards common goals, as well as exchanging experiences. Seeing a change or at least some small progress can help to keep people motivated, and bringing attention to good work already going on can bring some energy for further change making.

In terms of individual actions that can be taken in relation to the goals, identifying those issues we feel most drawn to can be a good way to get started in getting active and engaged. We can already begin working on some of the 17 goals from home, and this can be a stimulus for further engagement for returned volunteers. For example:

Goal 12 on 'Responsible Consumption and Production': we can ask questions such as "What do I wear? What do I eat?" or "Where are my jeans from? Where are my bananas from?" Tackling everyday issues can be an easy access point for volunteers to become engaged because they offer a common starting point for discussion with those volunteers who wish to have accessible entry points for ways to make change in their everyday lives. People are usually able to grasp issues better when the topic affects them personally.

‘Clean water’ (Goal 6) might not be regarded as an immediate problem in our European climate, but it is in many countries of the world. However, we are closely related to the issue of water scarcity and pollution with our consumption of virtual water, or the amount of water used in the production of our daily goods. For example, the production of a pair of jeans uses up 11,000 litres of water, most of it for growing cotton in very hot and dry areas where the water is pumped from deep wells, thereby depleting the natural water reserves. Additionally, textile factories pollute rivers with their chemically contaminated wastewater. It is a global problem that can only be solved if people in high-consuming countries dare to care.

Goal 7, ‘Affordable and Clean Energy’, and Goal 9 ‘Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure’, have huge, long lasting impacts on our environment. Making changes in our use of technologies (for example, regarding personal mobility, heating, and power) is an essential step. That the SDGs are well connected and dependent on one another is demonstrated by Goals 13, ‘Climate Action’, 14 ‘Life below Water’, and 15 ‘Life on Land’. While the global north has larger CO₂ emissions, the global south feels the effects of rapid global warming to a much higher degree, as a result of more tropical storms and flooding, as well as more droughts. Raising awareness and informing people about climate change and making them understand that every single human being can influence the climate with their everyday decisions, is a very concrete step towards achieving SDG 13 that volunteers can take by organising their own educational actions or actions that promote environmental protection. ‘Sustainable Cities and Communities’, Goal 11, may invite returnees to be active in their localities to encourage, for example, shared economies, inclusive infrastructure for disabled and elderly citizens, urban gardens, more bike stands and paths, greening of open spaces and buildings.

These examples show how broad the field of activism for the SDGs might be. As trainers of returned volunteers, we can link the individual interests of volunteers to SDG topics and the existing efforts of organisations that are working on the very same goals. This can, in turn, increase the chance of our returned volunteers’ activism becoming sustainable active citizenship.

Section 2- Embedding into my practice

This section of the resource explores different aspects of how we facilitate and explore the topics discussed in the first section practically with our groups. As mentioned, this is a companion manual to several training resources that have been developed as part of this project the links are in the introduction. Each of these follows the same flow, and is divided into four stages:

- 1) Reflecting on their journey
- 2) Exploring global issues
- 3) Developing action projects
- 4) Consolidating their learning.

Each manual includes steps on how to deliver the training. Therefore, this section will not go into specific activities, but will explore and support the process behind the actual activities, starting with the basics of facilitation and progressing through to dealing with controversial issues.

7. Facilitation Tips: Starting with the Basics

'Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand.'
Confucius 450 BC

Workshops are a powerful way to gain new knowledge or learn new skills and competencies. Their special feature is that the learning process happens from the bottom up within the group. The person leading the workshop, the facilitator, does not necessarily need to know more about the topic than the participants do. Workshop facilitation is about helping a group to gain skills and knowledge. Unlike the stereotype role of a school teacher, it's not about being in charge. The key to good facilitation is that the facilitator and the participants are equals; you all share responsibility to create a good learning experience. In this section we are presenting a collection of tips and tricks from experienced facilitators on how to prepare and run a successful workshop.

Aims and objectives

What are the aims and objectives of your session - what do you want participants to learn? What topics do you want to cover? For example, 'returned volunteers will understand that one way of staying involved with active global citizenship is to engage in their local communities' or 'participants will be more aware of specific opportunities to get active within civil society and within their communities'.

Timing

What is the overall time available for the session? How much time does each activity need? It's good to build into your plan a degree of flexibility around time for each activity. This could be to shorten or expand activities, in response to what is emerging from the group.

Using the learner-centred approach that we outline in greater detail in the next chapter, we might choose to decide together with the participants how long each session will last. If we feel that an important point in the discussion has been reached during the workshop, but time is running short, the more traditional option is for the facilitator to decide how much time they would like to add to the session, and how much should be cut from other sessions to accommodate this. In a learner-

centred approach, the facilitator puts the question to the group of participants. They present the options of either cutting the current session short or changing future sessions. To make an informed choice, participants need to know what kind of changes will result. This requires an experienced trainer, who can quickly assess the implications that the time lost will have on other sessions.

Creating a space for honesty, exchange and learning

The working culture and atmosphere you set at the beginning of the training will be very important for the depth of the discussions and the character of the exchanges, and so it is good to keep this in mind while planning activities to help people to get to know each other. If you manage to achieve an atmosphere where people feel welcome to contribute and at the same time know that learning can sometimes be connected with challenges, a huge part of the process is done. So how to facilitate the creation of such a space?

If you have an opportunity to be present with the group from the beginning of the training, try to observe the processes and expressions that take place, and how group members react to these. This will help you to create a picture of them and the baseline knowledge that is present in the group.

As a facilitator, you can also become part of the activities and share the same information about yourself. This will help you to create horizontal relationships with the participants and engender a feeling of trust. In preparation for the discussions on social justice topics, you can also work with positionality.

Always be mindful of your own perspectives, and how your own feelings, background, and experiences influence the way you treat certain issues. This will also show that you are conscious of the fact that you are not someone who thinks they know everything and is always right. Through transparency and being cognisant of the existence of your personal bias, you can support participants to likewise become aware of their own personal biases. In the first part of the training, you can also include a session on creating a group contract, whereby the group can determine the conditions that they wish to create. The 'What Next' training manuals provide advice and instructions for developing group contracts, and are an excellent resource to supplement your work on establishing positive group dynamics.

Creating space for critical thinking

While introducing issues that might be controversial, keep in mind that participants are bringing a plurality of opinions to the space. These are often shaped by their lived experience, and the way they interpret this lived experience is very much influenced by the contexts in which they were socialised, educated, and brought up. The aim of your intervention should not be to change their thinking, but rather to bring new perspectives and reflection questions. A useful tool for achieving this is to build your session on the model of the three-stage critical thinking learning cycle:

- **Evocation:** every learning process starts when the participants are able to realise and verbally express the things they already know about the chosen topic or what they think about it; at the same time they should also be able to formulate their questions on those areas of the topic about which they feel ambiguous, and to which they would like to find answers during the workshop/session.
- **Realisation of meaning:** confronting the participants' original conception of the topic with sources of new information, different opinions, and newly formulated contexts (e.g. text, film, narrative, lecture, etc.).
- **Reflection:** participants re-formulate their understanding of the topic, incorporating the newly acquired information and the discussions with their colleagues: they become fully aware of what they have learnt, which of their original ideas proved to be correct and which

were disproved, and the opinions and attitudes of other people (classmates, the teacher) on the topic.

As a facilitator of this model, you are not expected to give answers. You will rather experiment with the questions, including how to pose good questions in order to provoke a fruitful reflection.

It is also important to acknowledge that you, as a facilitator, are not responsible for all the injustice in the world and that you, as a person, are also on the path of learning. So don't take everything too personally! Not all the participants will be ready to challenge themselves and engage in critical thinking on the spot. Their willingness and ability to do so might be connected with previous experiences of being in similar spaces, using reflection methods or engaging in critical thinking. Everybody is entering the room with a different background and tools to deal with the issues. You, as the facilitator, can develop the empathy towards this diversity and adapt your expectations towards the group, offering methods that foster, rather than block, critical thinking on issues. Don't forget that you share the responsibility for the learning process with participants themselves, and it might be that you plant a seed that will only grow and flourish much later.

Common basis for understanding

Make sure that everyone within the group understands the topic and definitions, as well as the context of the issues discussed. At the beginning, you can invite the group to share their own knowledge of the issues as sources of information. Be aware of people with strong knowledge or opinions dominating the space. Create a space for everyone to participate so that you get an overview of the overall as well as individual participation. If you notice that there is a lack of understanding of some fundamentals, be prepared to provide definitions and explanations from reliable sources. During the discussion if you feel there might be complex terms involved, it can be helpful to establish a sign or a neutral word which can be used when something is not clear or needs an extra explanation.

Be an active facilitator

The art of facilitation lies in finding the balance between dominating the space and passively observing. Due to the nature of your position, you are expected by participants to lead the group towards the target, remind others to follow the rules the group agreed on, and to remind everyone to respect each other's differing opinions. You can support the group in developing a common understanding by re-wording questions posed by participants. It can also help to orient the group during discussions by repeating both the original question and the intended direction of the discussion. At the end or in the middle, it helps to sum up the main points and recap on what has been agreed. Facilitators should keep focused not only on verbal but also on facial expressions. For example, if someone does not understand and does not want to ask or to interrupt the speaker, the facilitators can ask for clarification from the speaker or can rephrase what has been said.

Asking good questions

As facilitating development education trainings is all about involving participants, a good facilitator will ask many questions rather than just presenting facts. Asking the group a question, or a series of questions, can enable them to find their own solutions and put them in control of their own learning. What kind of questions help to actively engage participants? When asking questions, always have your workshop aim in mind. As mentioned before, it should be at the core of your workshop plan. Think about how the words you choose will impact on the answers that you get. For example, there's a big difference between "How did you feel?" and "What did you think?" Do you want participants to discuss emotion and experience (the first question), or ideas and opinions (the second question)? Use open questions where possible as opposed to closed to draw out the learning.

The session flow

Practical considerations about the workshop space

- Is there natural light and good air circulation?
- What is the temperature - is it too hot or too cold?
- What are noise levels like?
- What is the size of the room and the group?
- How accessible is it? Are there any people with mobility issues among your participants? How will they access the workshop space?
- Breaks - try to have a break at least every 1.5 to 2 hours.
- Language barriers can become a significant problem. If the facilitator is speaking in their first language and that language is not the mother tongue of some of the group remind yourself and participants to speak slowly.

Beginning

As already mentioned before, the beginning of a workshop is all about getting to know one another and getting to know the topic. Leave some time (10 to 30 min) between the official, communicated start time and the actual beginning. This gives participants the opportunity to engage in casual conversations, helping to break the ice and create an informal atmosphere. Providing tea or coffee for this part is a great way of facilitating this process. As a facilitator try to avoid using this time to do preparations or setting things up for the workshop. Instead mix with participants, try to speak to each one of them and if you haven't met before, try to get to know them. Again this will help create an informal atmosphere but also give you some personal details of participants that you can refer to over the course of the workshop.

A good way to start the actual workshop before an introductory activity is an 'ice breaker', something to lighten the mood, typically by doing some sort of game or short physical activity. For a detailed list of good activities, please refer to the appendix of the 'What Next' training manual.

Main part

The main part of the workshop is aimed at achieving the aims and the objectives of the workshop. This will be up to you, the facilitator, to decide beforehand. Questions to consider might include:

- What are the aims and the objects you want to achieve?
- What activities and methodologies will you use?
- Are different learning styles accommodated for?

It can be a good idea to mix up the group. Participants are going to engage in direct conversation or work together in groups in many different ways, in all types of trainings. When forming groups, make sure existing groups of friends are split up and evenly distributed. You want a cohesive, inclusive atmosphere and by mixing participants you can facilitate that. In this way participants have to engage with others in the group they haven't talked to before, which can help challenge preconceptions and stereotypes.

Closing

It is good to have space to check in with the participants how they are feeling after the session, and to allow space for reflection. The length can depend on the time frame of the session. It is good to ask whether there are any thoughts or questions after each session so that people can consolidate their learning.

8. 'Bottom Up' facilitation: learner-centred, adjusting our practice

There are different forms of education. We believe that good facilitation should always put the learners' needs at the centre of the workshop. It can be easy to think about the message that we want to bring across in a workshop, but we should never lose sight of the participants and their learning needs. This section explores how we can plan a session by placing volunteer motivation at the heart of the planning. Reflecting on it when planning a training can very fundamentally transform our usual planning scheme.

Some principles of a learner-centred approach based on the experience of the partners of this project:

Setting the agenda jointly

Often in trainings, an agenda is planned in advance by the trainers, presented to participants at the beginning of the training and then feedback is gathered, in addition to asking about expectations. In a more learner-centred approach, the agenda is set with as much participation from future participants as possible. If the training participants are known and can be contacted in advance, the trainers can get input on the agenda during the preparation stage. Sending out an email with some key questions about expectations and needs is an easy to use tool to involve participants. Sample questions to motivate participants to express their wishes for the training include:

- The training would be successful for you if ...?
- The most important thing you want to learn more about is ...?
- What would be most challenging for you in the training?

Many other questions could be used at this stage, depending on the context of the training. These questions could also be part of a motivational letter required as part of the application process.

Even if the training is an open event, agenda setting can be conducted in a participatory manner. In this case, an option might be creating a joint timeline with participants at the beginning of a workshop or, if the workshop is running over several days, at the beginning of each day. This communal approach allows time to plan the event together. Joint planning does not mean total freedom of choice for the participants, as we as facilitators have a limited toolbox to create sessions, so we may not be able to deliver everything that the group might desire. However, even if the options to choose from are limited due to our own restrictions as facilitators, there is a possibility to discuss the order of sessions throughout the day. Sharing our own facilitation plan with the group can lead to very significant and beneficial adaptations of the workshop to the needs of the group. This way, the group also becomes part of the facilitation process, which can be very empowering for participants.

Sharing the methods

It is vital for trainers facilitating a learner-centred approach to be more transparent not only about topics, but also about methods. Offering a group of participants several methods that lead to the same result is challenging because it will require more time to discuss which way to go. However, participants will have much more ownership of a session and feel responsible for achieving a positive result, if they select the methodology. Clearly pointing out the differences to be expected depending on which methods are used will make the decision easier and thus quicker for the group. In addition, a facilitator should be able to reflect on the general direction that the workshop or training is taking

and, if the general aim will be affected by the course of action the participants select, to address this issue with the group.

Letting participants process the results of the training

A learner-centred approach will shift a lot of the work around summing up results from the facilitator to the group. The group will need to reflect on what they have achieved, in order to support further working processes and follow-up on the results post-training. Better results can again be achieved by presenting different methodologies to choose from.

How might this look working with international volunteers?

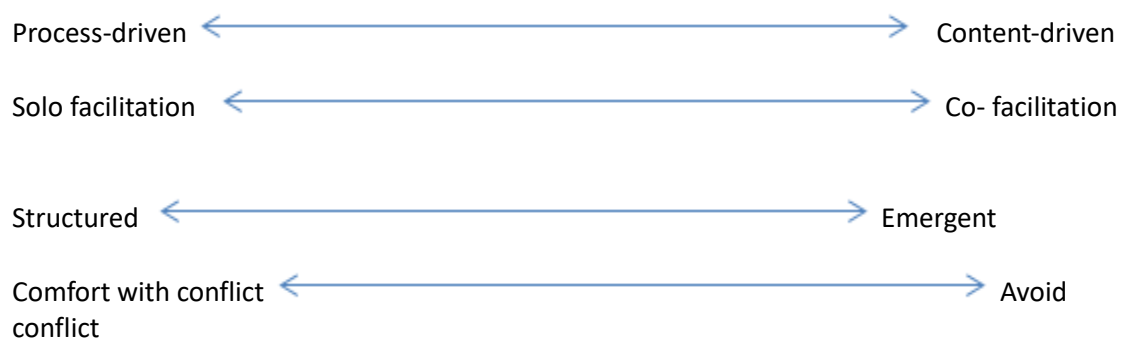
How this type of facilitation may work when working with returned volunteers will be different depending on the group. We are still working with the volunteers to encourage critical thinking, which means we will bring different materials to explore topics. An example of this may be: bringing two articles, one defending voluntourism and a second that critiques it. This will bring up thoughts for the participants; it is then the aim of the facilitator to be curious about what participants do with this.

It is good for the facilitator to be aware if they are telling the group something, which could include, for example, the terminology issues that we looked at in Chapter One. Rather than telling participants that one term is wrong and the other is correct, it may be more helpful to have a discussion around each of the terms. Facilitation is not always easy. In the next section, we will begin to explore the difficulties we can have as a facilitator.

9. Group Dynamics: Tips and tricks for difficult situations

Have you ever felt yourself in an awkward situation as a facilitator? Have you ever thought, “I don’t know what to do right now” in the middle of a session? Do you ever think about ‘difficult people’ in your group and how to handle them? In talking with colleagues involved in facilitation there is a shared sense that, frequently, space is missing to explore the tricky bits around facilitation, the awkward moments and difficult situations. Different from the management of controversial issues that will be explored in the next chapter, this chapter will go through some of these group facilitation issues and offer some anecdotes that have been discussed in response. The hope is that this will awaken your own inner facilitator, and that you can reflect on what you yourself might do differently in response to what we propose here.

Before going into some of the issues identified in preparation for this chapter, we would like to invite you to reflect on your own practice. What kind of a facilitator are you? And where would you like to grow in your facilitation style? We have prepared a spectrum for you to consider. Please put an ‘X’ on the place where you think you are on each line, and then put a circle if there is a place on the line towards which you would like to move in your practice. In the space between, maybe there are questions for you to reflect on yourself about how to deepen your own practice: hopefully this chapter will go some way to filling in this gap of personal and professional reflective practice.



Wherever you are on the spectrum, it is the right place to be right now!

We would like to suggest that for every session that is delivered, we as facilitators walk a very fine line between the content we wish to deliver, the process the group goes through to get to this learning, and ‘you’ – your personal style, the process you choose, existing knowledge, and even how you are feeling on that day! Maybe you might like to consider: what do I need to do, where do I need to go, who do I need to work with... to deepen my own practice? What is missing in my current practice and how can I fill this? As you read this chapter, we invite you to take this frame with you, consider what might be your response in the following situations, and proactively think of other ways to manage some of the situations presented.

The Issues

These issues were identified through conversation with colleagues who facilitate in the international volunteering sector. The responses are in no way meant to be prescriptive: rather, we want to get a conversation started to uncover some of those things that we don’t often have the chance to talk about in facilitation. Here are some of the themes we explored:

The ‘difficult’ person

You are only a half an hour into your session and already you have spotted them: the ‘difficult’ person, the person who has started to irritate you and already you may be making assumptions

about them. There is the potential that this person could steal some of your energy, taking your attention away from the other members of the group or the task at hand. What can you do?

Firstly, it might be interesting to make note of the characteristics of your 'difficult' person. What is it about this person that might possibly be triggering your own prejudices right now? Exploring this question in an Art of Facilitation workshop (2017), the possibility emerged that this might reflect something in yourself, as opposed to the actual participant. The Peacebuilder's Handbook (Doherty, M. 2014) presents some guidelines to consider when dealing with difficult people:

- Breathing – learn how to control your breathing in a time of crisis.
- Criticism – do not go on the defensive if criticised. Listen, consider, then respond if you think it necessary.
- Do not put people down – do not ridicule someone if they have made a derogatory comment about you, as it may backfire on you later in a programme. Accept the person's comments, consider your response and move on.
- The Challenger – remember those who challenge you have a right to do so. Let them do so without competing with them. Their challenge to you may be part of their own insecurity.
- Never assume anything - as a facilitator you are not a mind reader. However, you can read body language, particularly when people get tired and restless. Ask direct questions if you have any doubts about an individual's participation or non-participation in any given activity.
- The Spoiler – if someone is persistently disrupting the group you can confront them directly in the group; or take them to one side and check in with them separately.

Additionally, we would like to suggest that body language can go a long way to influence the situation, e.g. standing up to regain control or shift the energy; giving people space by not walking towards them or making them feel targeted.

Going off on a tangent

The conversation has gone off on a tangent... or someone has thrown something in that has nothing to do with the plan but is quite interesting at the same time. As a facilitator, you need to think on the spot of what to do: do you follow this new course and the emerging conversation, or do you stick to the plan as agreed? This has an added layer of complexity when you are in a facilitation team – how can you get the space to check in with each other when you are already with the group?

In terms of facilitation style, some facilitators like to stick to the schedule that had been planned and agreed in advance. This includes deciding on the learning outcomes and the activities and discussions in order to get to the intended learning for the group. Many participants likewise feel like they are being kept on track by facilitators, and disrespecting or veering off course can use up time at the expense of other activities. Other facilitators have a more emergent style of facilitation. The session plan in this case would be to create the conditions for the group to inform their own direction, and the role of the facilitator is to guide and support this journey of learning and, as has been discussed in the previous two chapters, this is described as having a 'learner-centred approach'.

Whatever your facilitation style, going off on a tangent is inevitably something that can happen in our sessions. Sometimes these tangents can offer the space for deep learning to take place in a way that otherwise wouldn't otherwise have been possible. Human beings are not linear creatures and learning does not follow a linear formula. Therefore tangents can be a natural direction of an individual's or the group's thought process and could possibly even be exactly where you need to be right now!

If a conversation emerges that seems like it is going off on a tangent, it might be an idea to check in with the bigger picture of what you are trying to achieve: Who are the group? Where are they at right now? Where do they want to get to through this session? Is what has been said relevant to where we want to go together, even if it was not in the plan? You will need to use your discretion to know the difference between an unnecessary distraction and the emergence of a path towards a deeper learning. It is also important to be able to balance this with the availability of time (and what you might need to sacrifice in order to hold this space for this emerging conversation), the needs of the whole group (instead of just for one individual) and the comfort you have as a (co-)facilitator to guide the conversation effectively.

Checking in with participants on the tangent can be a way of co-creating the space and the agenda with them. Art of Hosting is an approach to facilitation that embraces 'co-creation' between facilitator and group participants: its underlying assumption is that everyone holds a little bit of the truth that you are collectively trying to reach. Art of Hosting training equips facilitators with the tools and confidence to develop skills in emerging conversations and ideas – without feeling like you are going off on unnecessary tangents (www.artofhosting.org)

'Over'-experience in the group

As a facilitator, you can have the potential to feel overwhelmed or under experienced when there is a very experienced person in the group. First of all, remember that any anxiety you feel represents more your perception of that person than how they might actually be viewing the situation, so be gentle with yourself and value this person's experience as part of the collective experience of the wider group.

This can also be an opportunity to recognise and validate all the experiences in the group and use this to your advantage as a resource for learning. Someone might have a lot of experience, but someone else with less experience of the issues might have very good and critical questions on a topic; someone else might have a curiosity that uncovers learning that otherwise would not have been tapped; someone else might have a perspective that otherwise wouldn't be heard if the group were more homogenous. So value all the experiences everyone is bringing and have confidence to bring these to life through the session.

Feedback taking too long

You have broken people into smaller groups to work on an activity and now you have asked for feedback. However, each group is taking 10 or more minutes to feed back what they have been talking about! This is using valuable time and the energy of the group is starting to dissipate. What do you do?

Using the learning from the Art of Facilitation workshop (May 2017) some ideas for pre-empting this and taking control before this situation arises can include:

- Setting a framework for feedback, e.g. ask groups to come back with 3 main points to sum up their discussion;
- Invite a group to give one piece of learning that came out of the discussion and ask if any other groups had this same point. Already you have potentially minimised repetition between groups;
- Invite groups to sum up 3 – 5 main points on post-its and bring everyone together to collate these with a view to finding similarities;
- If the feedback is unnecessary, don't ask for it! Instead, you could ask, "how did you find that

activity?"; "what was the learning you experienced through that activity?"

Whatever the issue concerning group dynamics in your facilitation work, ongoing and regular reflection will enable you to learn from any of these dynamics and adjust your practice going forwards accordingly. Groups are made up of individuals, and you yourself are human, so be gentle and create a space whereby everyone - including yourself - can be the best that they can be on any given day. The more facilitation experience you have, the more 'tools' you will carry with you, and you will navigate any issues that emerge during your sessions with a greater ease.

10. Managing controversial issues

'A controversial issue is one in which there are competing beliefs, cultural practices, values and interests; strong disagreements and emotions; and potential political sensitivity. It is sometimes referred to as a 'hot button issue'.'

Global Education (2012)

As a facilitator engaged in social justice work with returned volunteers, you will probably experience moments where you will wonder - is this reproducing stereotypical thinking? Reinforcing prejudices? Am I in a position to intervene or comment on this statement? How can I intervene in a non-judgemental way and instead foster further critical thinking on the issue? And will I block the participant's further reflection if I intervene?

These and many other questions will probably arise in your mind while accompanying your group through the reflection and engagement process. In the beginning, it might be difficult to find answers or responses. As a facilitator, you will also go through the learning process, and with each new facilitation experience it will be easier to respond in an appropriate way that nourishes learning of the group you are working with. On top of this, it is important to acknowledge that there are no simple or unique responses to controversial situations, nor is there one universal best way of dealing with controversial issues within groups. Within each group, strategies to discuss and manage controversial issues will work differently. Thus it is recommended to think of methods sensitive to context and to stay flexible in response to the group.

Situations in which controversial issues pop up and how to deal with them

Learning is often connected with stepping out of our comfort zone. For facilitators, this can apply in relation to our level of understanding of the issues discussed. Facilitators should be ready to clarify and share 'respected' definitions (see chapter 1) and provide reliable sources. Try to use a range of credible sources, which cover different perspectives on the issues. Similarly, and using the tools discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 7, challenge participants to identify the underlying values or assumptions contained within persuasive statements. Uncover the root of the controversy. Appreciate the magnitude of the issue's complexity.

When sensitive topics are discussed, it is very probable that some participants will get emotional (upset, angry, etc). When this happens, facilitators should show empathy with the participants, remain calm and try to turn the discussion back into the learning experience and to the original direction while still acknowledging the strength of emotion that has been evoked. However, the issues, once raised, should not be overlooked. You can defer it until you make a plan to deal with it and emotions become calmer.

Always try to use questions in order to unpack what formed our opinions and created our biases and blind spots. Don't be demagogic or insist on one single way of seeing things - you will very probably block the participants from further learning. If you have a strong opinion or experience of a particular issue, share it in the right moment, but don't forget to contextualise - speak only for yourself and your experience with the topic. You can also talk about what shaped your lens on the issue and whether you recall some major shifts in your perception. What triggered them? By being transparent about your own learning path, you can help the participants foster their learning process.

From the beginning of the training, it should be clear for the group that discriminatory comments are

not welcome in the space. We are, however, not always conscious about the discrimination we may be perpetuating. In these cases, if it becomes apparent that comments are discriminatory to certain groups of people or tend to reinforce stereotypes or prejudice, always react to make this clear to the group. It is important to make people understand why something is discriminatory, and you can shift your intervention into an opportunity for learning.

It can also happen that you feel that you should have reacted to some comments, but you didn't. You can think about the issue during team debriefings with your colleagues and try to figure out if there is a way to bring up the comment or situation in the next sessions, in order to gain some learning later on. If this is not possible, let it be and remind yourself that this can happen and that you don't carry an ultimate responsibility for everything that is being expressed. As your facilitation experience grows, such moments will probably happen less and less often. Sometimes it is possible to include the topic in another session or adjust the program to focus more on that issue, if you think it is important to cover it. In other cases, the issue will pop up again organically in the next discussions. This time you will be ready to react and will have some strategies on how to respond in your head.

In general, while dealing with difficult and controversial issues, it is always good to have support among your co-facilitators. The team round is a great space to share and to search for the strategies to respond. Sometimes, there may be other members of the team who will call you out for not reacting in certain situations. Don't take offence, but rather learn from it from the next time.

The dynamics of co-facilitation

Co-facilitation – it can be the greatest support for you as a facilitator, or quite the cause of stress! In the context of facilitating potentially controversial issues with someone else, it is good for each of you to be respectful of one another, know each other's styles and equip yourselves with effective tools to facilitate a session that feels like a 'whole' rather than the sum of many parts. Getting to know one another as much as possible in advance is good (if this is someone new you will work with). Some tips that can be helpful:

- Agree in advance how you will communicate whenever you are in front of the group. You might need a code word for "help me!"; you might have an agreement for how you will keep one another respectfully on track if needed;
- Be active! When your co-facilitator is leading, be proactive in support (this is not the time to have a daydream);
- Trust one another – while you mightn't do it this way, as long as you have collectively agreed the direction and the learning outcomes, trust that whatever direction your co-facilitator is going is where they feel they need to be – and if needed, you can help to summarise at the end to bring it back if it did veer off, and make the connection to the next activity within the bigger picture.
- If you are planning different sessions to be facilitated by different facilitators it is vital to get a common agreement on the overall flow of the whole training. This means to understand especially the points of transition from one session/one facilitator to the following session/following facilitator. As the second facilitator you might not need to know every detail of the previous session in advance. But in order to plan your session properly you need to understand what the participants will be left with when you pick them up. So it is important to communicate amongst facilitators what the intended learning results of each session will be in order to built up the following session on these.

Self-care as a facilitator

When facilitating controversial issues, it is critical to look after yourself. Group work can be

exhausting; it is not a normal experience to listen so intensely and be switched 'on' for the whole time that you are in session. This uses a lot of energy and while adrenaline might carry you through, it is important to check in with your own energy needs and look after yourself in the midst of it all.

- Limit the number of trainings you facilitate in any given week. As we are using our 'fight or flight' energy to work with groups (which we need to be able to get into that space of deep listening and thinking), this can take us out of our resilience zone temporarily to allow us to do the job. However, too much of staying in this 'hyper' zone can cause longer-term stress.
- Take time out – taking time out both before a session and the evening or day afterwards can allow your energy reserves to replenish themselves.
- Organise a debriefing session for yourself if necessary – so that you are not holding on to anything following a session.
- Identify ongoing practices that can help to resource you for the long term – so rather than waiting to activate your self care when you are feeling exhausted, activate practices that serve you on an ongoing basis (e.g. exercise, meditation, breathing) so that these are easier to engage with when you need it most.

11. Conclusion

The preceding chapter on managing controversial issues leaves us in a good position to hand over to you! The issues raised in the first section of this Companion suggest many things that may inform your practice as a facilitator. At the start of this resource, we invited you to consider language within development, the complex context of international volunteering, and how volunteers' motivations can reflect the wider frames and values of our volunteer programmes and, indeed, society more generally. These first few chapters raise questions that can inform not only the training room, but also the values within volunteering programmes. By moving towards a more critical global education approach in our practice, opportunities, contradictions and hopefully conversations can emerge that will inform organisations, as well as resonate within wider international volunteering debates and the sector. The SDGs present an opportunity to develop a universal way of seeing 'development' as something that needs to happen in all countries across the world - including our own. This is a good time to critically engage with the SDGs and find ways for the actions of volunteers to likewise link global perspectives to their local action. It is always the right time to interrogate some of the ethnocentric, a-historic and depoliticised approaches that have been dominant in international volunteering to date. We hope that through these various chapters and discussions, a deepened sense of interdependence, solidarity and mutual learning can be embedded into volunteering programmes, thus enriching the experience for all individuals and communities involved in our programmes.

Should you wish to take on board the various debates into your practice, this will require skills to sensitively manage the conversations that will arise. For many volunteers and indeed, facilitators, some of these ideas may be quite new and even difficult to grasp, particularly as this critical reflection on international volunteering can expose the fact that organisations and countries in the global north can be complicit in sustaining global injustice. Section 2 sets out some tangible ways for engaging participants in these debates, with practical pointers on taking care around group dynamics and controversial issues, and tips to navigate the facilitation space effectively.

International volunteering and the very space of facilitation are ever-changing. New debates will emerge and we will always have a need to return to age-old questions in the development field. And so rather than giving out more facts, figures or information, through this resource we hope that we have effectively tickled your curiosity, given wind to your sail and reassured you that you are not alone in this journey. You now have a companion - and indeed there are many peer support networks out there to support you as you navigate the changing terrain of the training room with international volunteers. Find these networks: they may be through your organisation or they may be in a different country completely. They may be a friend or someone you only contact for facilitation support. Everyone learns something when good questions are asked.

'People live in each other's shelter' - Irish Proverb

You are not a magician but you will bring something special to the training space. There is a huge responsibility in preparing and supporting people who will volunteer in another part of the world; the responsibility is for those volunteers with whom you work, but also that the experience will be rich for their colleagues they meet in the hosting country. However - and this is important - you can only do your bit as well as you can, do and the rest will rely on many other people and many other factors.

'Do as much as you can, as well as you can, for as many as you can, for as long as you can.'
(Fr. Aengus Finucane, Concern Worldwide)

We wish you the very best going forwards in your work with volunteers, through your important role as a facilitator. Most importantly, we hope that those you work with can benefit from a positive experience of facilitation that leaves them feeling curious, questioning and in charge of their own learning. When the work is done, we hope that the participants can feel that they did the hard work, that the learning was gained through critical personal reflection, co-creation of the agenda, and insights and realisations triggered by good questions and the participation of others. They may not remember all the facts that you brought to the session, but they will remember how they felt, how well they were able to participate and may even look back at the session as one step on a wider learning journey that will never end.

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