UN
Volunteers

VOLUNTEERISM IN VIET NAM

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

A CASE STUDY APPROACH
2005

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For the United Nations Volunteers Programme, Viet Nam

Matthew Greenwood
Minh Vo
Truong Thu My

Ha Noi, October 2005

FOREWORD

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will require the dedication and hard work of all of us. The job of lifting billions of poor people out of poverty cannot be left to governments, multilateral organizations and donor groups. If we are serious about achieving these goals then we must all contribute to the extent that we are able.
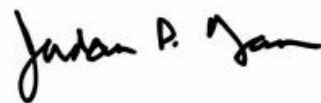
Volunteerism harnesses the power of people to promote change. This report exemplifies the spirit of voluntarism and the creative role that ordinary people can play in the global effort to eliminate poverty. The report was produced by a team of online volunteers located in three different countries. The entire study, from research to finalization, was conducted online. It stands as an innovative example of how volunteer efforts can drive Viet Nam's progress toward achieving the MDGs. Communications technologies make new forms of collaboration possible if complemented by hard work and good will.

Thousands of volunteers work every day in a myriad of different roles throughout Viet Nam. Sometimes their work is recognized and celebrated, but more often, only those that they work for and with are aware of their contribution.

Volunteers help poor women take a more proactive role in local development; they encourage street children to stay in school; work to prevent HIV transmission and contribute professional skills like physical therapy. Volunteers promote testing food safety; protect national parks; and teach foreign languages to improve work opportunities for old and young people.

These examples illustrate the power of volunteerism in the struggle to achieve the MDGs. The report also emphasizes the need for improvements in areas such as support and coordination to make the volunteer sector more effective in Viet Nam.

Volunteers, in contributing their skills, energy and creativity to the development process, are a reaffirmation of the idea of a single global community and shared human destiny embodied in the Millennium Declaration. In the words of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, "It is barely conceivable that the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved without the efforts, creativity and solidarity of many millions of ordinary citizens through voluntary action."

Jordan Ryan
UN Resident Coordinator
UNDP Resident Representative

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Conducting a study like this is always a huge effort. How admirable is it then that a team of volunteers, who did not receive any financial compensation for their work, conducted this study! And if that was not enough, one wonders how this study was at all possible given that the volunteer researchers were living on three different continents and did all of their work via e-mail. For this amazing effort and long-term commitment, I would like to express my utmost gratitude and admiration to our online volunteer team:

- Ms. Truong Thu My (Viet Nam)
- Ms. Minh Vo (USA)
- Mr. Matthew Greenwood (Australia)

Sincere acknowledgement must also go to the participants of this study. Without their contributions and willingness to participate, including their availability for follow-up questions and discussion, this study would not have been possible.

In addition, I would like to thank a number of volunteers in our UNV country office who have provided the necessary back-up support to the research team: Mr. Max Tunon and Ms. Cao Ho My Giang. I also would like to thank three United Nations Volunteer Specialists working with UNDP Viet Nam, Mr. Jago Penrose, Mr. Scott Cheshier, and Mr. Michael Coleman, for editing and commenting on the final draft of this report.

And I thank you, the reader, for taking the time to read through this report and to reflect on its findings. The report itself, entirely produced by volunteers, provides evidence of how volunteerism can effectively contribute to development, and it also documents how many volunteers have contributed their time, energy, knowledge and skills to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals in Viet Nam. All of these volunteers, and many others who are serving every day in different corners of Viet Nam, need your support in promoting volunteerism for development and in creating an enabling environment that maximizes their contribution to making the Millennium Development Goals a reality for all people.

Koen Van Acoleyen
UNV Programme Officer

ABBREVIATIONS

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VIO	Volunteer-Involving Organization
VSA	Volunteer-Sending Agency

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Volunteerism cannot only make significant contributions to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in developing countries,[1] it can have significant positive social and economic impacts on all countries and societies. It can benefit society through increased participation of citizens, by breaking down cultural barriers and misunderstandings and strengthening good governance and transparency. It can also have direct development impacts. Using this as a basis, this study investigates the contribution of volunteerism in Viet Nam and provides more evidence to support the link between volunteerism and the contributions to the achievement of the MDGs in this country.

This was done through a case study approach with volunteers (both International and National), Volunteer-Involving Organizations (VIO), beneficiaries and Volunteer-Sending Agencies (VSA). There were nine cases selected in this qualitative research out of a total of 12 respondents. There were limitations to the data (limited participation) as well as with the methodology (survey approach with limited follow-up and survey design).

Local capacities were focused on in this study, as they are important factors in development. Specifically, local capacities are important in sustaining the achievements made in the community; capacities the volunteer might have encouraged, supported or facilitated. Building local capacity for active participation in the development process, increases the likelihood that achievements made will be sustained by local communities themselves once the assistance or the volunteer, leaves.

The results of this study do indeed support the assertion that volunteerism can make significant contributions to the achievement of the MDGs. This may vary between individual cases due to a variety of reasons, but large and small contributions have a positive impact. Some of the contributions are immediate and others will take a number of years before the benefits are fully realized. Furthermore the work of a volunteer can make contributions to more than one of the MDGs. For example, a teacher trainer can assist in the addressing of primary education issues through helping teachers become better at teaching, but also can make impacts on gender equity through the empowerment of female teachers or through promoting gender equity in the classroom. A project officer working to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS through support to male drug users, can impact women by alleviating the income-earning burden placed on them by male drug dependency. This highlights the interrelationship between MDGs and the contributions made by some of the participants.

There are a number of factors that were highlighted in this study that both limit or enhance the contributions of the volunteers. Collaboration between the main stakeholders in the volunteer placement is very important. The volunteer to VIO and the VSA all need to work well together to enhance the volunteer's contributions. The development of trust, enhancing working relationships, making expectations clear through open communication, and sensitivity to Vietnamese culture were essential to enhancing volunteer contributions. Language barriers and generally low capacity issues (technical, resources etc.) were an impediment to the overall process. Support for the volunteer from the VIO and the VSA

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1   UNDP, "Volunteerism and Development", Essentials, UNDP Evaluation Office, October 2003 Page 1

was also seen as an enhancing factor. There appears to be a difference in the promotion of volunteerism between the international and national communities. International volunteerism appears to be more visible and taken more seriously than does national volunteerism.

The recommendations are outlined in Section 5 but to summarize:

- The Vietnamese Government and international and Vietnamese development agencies should recognize the impact of volunteerism and its potential role in their development strategies;
- A more systematic coordination of volunteers and volunteer promotion is needed;
- Having in-country volunteer coordinators who are knowledgeable about working and living conditions in Viet Nam is important to support international volunteers;
- Support and training is needed to develop strong Vietnamese VSAs;
- VIOs, as well as beneficiaries, need to clearly identify their needs and how volunteers can assist them to reach their goals;
- VIOs also need to be open to, and even embrace change when needed, so that is there is a degree of flexibility and responsiveness to an often evolving situation;
- Volunteers need to be well prepared for the VIOs or beneficiaries they are providing their services to, rather than expecting the VIOs or beneficiaries to adapt to their working styles and ethics;
- International volunteers need to be willing to integrate themselves into Vietnamese society and working environment;
- Volunteers need to recognize their roles in volunteer promotion and contributing to society by engendering community participation, civic engagement, and increasing social harmony. In other words they should see themselves as 'ambassadors' for volunteerism.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Purpose of the Study

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) Millennium Declaration was adopted by 189 countries with a commitment to eradicate poverty, promote human dignity and equality and achieve peace, democracy, and environmental sustainability. Emanating from the Millennium Declaration, eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were identified:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability;
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Volunteerism has been recognised as playing an important role in achieving the eight MDGs.[2] Volunteerism can make important contributions to society by engendering community participation, civic engagement and the building of social capital and thus can increase social harmony[3]. International volunteerism also provides a means to break down misconceptions and barriers caused by cultural misunderstandings and a lack of awareness. Despite voluntary action being an important part of virtually every civilization and society, there is a lack of information and research to show what an important contribution volunteering makes to their economy and society. Furthermore limited information on how to undertake research on volunteering has also limited those eager to undertake such studies[4].

United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in Viet Nam is very active in promoting volunteerism as a sustainable development strategy. Being a part of the UN, UNV aims to contribute to the achievement of the eight MDGs. However, understanding about how the contributions of volunteerism can help lead to the achievement of the MDGs in Viet Nam is limited.

This case study was designed to explore volunteerism in Viet Nam in order to identify its role in the achievement of the MDGs. It looks equally into the challenges encountered by the volunteers that may limit their efforts, as well as factors that can enhance their contributions. This study will be used to advocate for volunteerism as a development strategy and provide recommendations to the Government of Viet Nam and other development actors on how the contributions of volunteers can be enhanced.
The primary objectives of the study are

- To investigate the linkages between volunteerism and the achievement of MDGs;
- To investigate factors that limit or enhance the impact volunteerism has on achievement of the MDGs;
- To provide reco mmendations to the Government of Viet Nam and development actors to enhance the role of volunteerism in the development process.

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2 UNDP, "Volunteerism and Development", Essentials, UNDP Evaluation Office, October 2003 Page 1
3 United Nations Volunteers, 2001, "Measuring Volunteering: A Practical Toolkit", UNV, Bonn Germany, page 8.
4 United Nations Volunteers, 2001, "Measuring Volunteering: A Practical Toolkit", UNV, Bonn Germany, page 7.

2.2   Literature Review

2.2.1   What is Volunteerism?

"Volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at, inter alia*, such areas as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management and social integration and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination."*[5]

Added to this, volunteerism can be summarized as[6]:

- Work undertaken for no financial gain. Such financial gain would exclude any monetary reimbursements, e.g.
  - ✓ When a volunteer would receive any payment, which is less than the market value of the work
  - ✓ When an organization reimburses legitimate expenses arising out of volunteer activities performed by a person
  - ✓ When received by a person with limited or no financial resources to enable that person to engage in volunteerism.
- When work is undertaken by one's own free will and in a spirit of volunteerism
- When volunteerism brings a benefit to a third party, as well as to the people who volunteer

Any volunteer definition however must recognize the element of personal sacrifice and the key attributes of a volunteer where a volunteer is someone who makes a personal contribution, at some cost to themselves, to assist another community in need. They live and work within a volunteer ethos, which recognizes the importance of respect for culture, participation of local people, and sustainability[7].

2.2.2   Benefits of Volunteerism

There are significant benefits from volunteerism both at a societal level as well as to the individual. Volunteerism promotes participation, civic engagement and the building of trust among citizens, which in turn contributes to the cohesion and stability of society. If the volunteers happen to be of different ethnic origins, religions, or economic statuses, the fact of their acting together can help to increase social harmony[8]. The strengthening of the links between various groups in society is the building of 'social capital'[9]. Social capital forms the basis of strengthening civil society and hence, public participation. This in turn, promotes good governance and social development. Furthermore, studies have indicated that volunteerism contributes to the economic well-being of society[10]. For example, in South Africa many grassroots community structures developed in response to the need for common interest and shared values within a society in conflict. This was to counter the lack of formal social and political structures during the Apartheid era. Many of these structures provide forums through which members can learn to participate in formal democratic processes at the lowest levels[11].

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5   Resolution A/57/106, "Follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers", adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 26 November 2002
6   United Nations Volunteers, 2001, "Measuring Volunteering: A Practical Toolkit", UNV, Bonn Germany, page 11.
7   Lucas, B., 2004, "Volunteer Program Issues and Options A Discussion Document", AusAID, Canberra, Australia, page 1
8   United Nations Volunteers, 2001, "Measuring Volunteering: A Practical Toolkit", UNV, Bonn Germany, page 11
9   Robert Putnam advanced this concept as the "features of social life – networks, norms, and trust – that enable participants to act together and more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (Putnam, 1995: 664-65)
10 Roy, K., and S. Ziemek, "On The Economics of Volunteering", A research study directed by ZEF as a joint initiative with the United Nations Volunteer Programme, page 4.
11 Russell, B., 2003, "The Contribution of the South African Volunteering Sector To Sustainable Development in that Country", UNDP, South Africa, page 10.

Volunteerism also plays a role in integrating those sectors of society that are most marginalized, and those special-needs groups that are most overlooked by government and the private sector. For example, volunteerism gives the opportunity for young people to participate, to develop socially and to learn skills that can be used in employment as well as to promote active participation in society as a whole. This also applies to the unemployed in general.

Volunteerism benefits volunteers in terms of experience and new knowledge, self-fulfilment, social recognition and career development. Volunteerism also adds value to the services governments provide, such as health care and education, where volunteers are actively engaged.

The range and the form of volunteer works, the age, gender and social status of volunteers vary from community to community, yet there are sometimes commonalities. In Peru[12], Botswana[13] and Kazakhstan[14] for example, volunteers are more educated, more likely to hold a job, more likely to be the head of a household, and more likely to be married. The reasons for this are that people find volunteering to be a way to display their attachment and/or responsibility to the community or to find their place in the society. Voluntary activity by people of higher education or social status is highly sought after. Volunteerism has become much richer and extensive in society in that it is no longer limited to mutual assistance during harvest time, weddings, funerals, or to services in the community such as construction of a common house, road, or national services. Volunteer services now include medical and legal consultancy, fund mobilization, technical training, environment protection, and many other services to society.

2.2.3 International Trends and Management of Volunteers

There have been changes and trends in the international development sector that have impacted on the way that VSAs operate[15]. There has been a general shift in focus towards capacity-building at local levels as opposed to general service provision. Added to this is, the trend of developing countries to raise their own labour force levels in traditional volunteer support areas such as teaching, nursing and other sectors. As a result, developing countries now seek assistance from better-trained, more professionally experienced and more specialized volunteers. Furthermore there is an international set of development goals, the Millennium Development Goals that focus development assistance internationally. Added to this is, the increasing professionalism of the international NGO sector.

The key trends therefore in international volunteering include[16]:

- a 'development-centred' approach to volunteering, as opposed to a 'cross-cultural exchange';
- a capacity-building approach, rather than a service delivery approach;
- a programmatic approach, as opposed to individual volunteer placements;
- an enhancement of strategic focus with fewer countries of operation;
- an increased focus on specific sectors determined by overall objectives of a volunteer country programme approach, rather than on a wide range of sectors;
- increased recruitment of volunteers from developing countries;

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12 Norbert R. Schady, 2001, "Who Participates? The Supply of Volunteer Labor and the Distribution of Government Programs in Rural Peru", World Bank, Washington DC
13 UNV/Botswana National IYY 2001 Committee, "Measuring Volunteerism in Botswana', 2001
14 UNV, "Volunteering in Kazakhstan, Key Findings of a National Survey", Almaty, Kazakhstan, 2001.
15 Lucas, B., 2004, "Volunteer Program Issues and Options A Discussion Document", AusAID, Canberra, Australia, page 12
16 Lucas, B., 2004, "Volunteer Program Issues and Options A Discussion Document", AusAID, Canberra, Australia, page 12

- increased linkages with professional bodies and organizations for the supply and support of volunteers;
- a broad range of activities both in support of, and beyond the placing of volunteers, including direct support for partner organizations through project funding.

Volunteering by making significant contributions to the development of society, is becoming more professional and seen as part of a career development activity. Despite this, the many contributions are not always recognized by members of society or even the beneficiaries themselves. In many cases, there are negative perceptions of volunteerism and a reluctance to perform unpaid civic duties in today's modern state in spite of the potential benefits to be gained from the volunteering experience.

2.2.4 Challenges

Despite the changes and trends in international development and the focus of developing countries to an overall and focussed approach to volunteer 'interventions, there remain a number of significant challenges within developing countries themselves. Some country studies (South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Kazakhstan[17]) have highlighted significant challenges for country volunteer programmes. In South Africa for example, the problems highlighted were[18]:

- Lack of government financial support;
- Delays and red tape in releasing financial support;
- Limited public awareness;
- Pressures to raise income from selling services and products;
- Competition from for-profit businesses.

In Sri Lanka the problems highlighted were[19]:

- There are negative images of and attitudes towards volunteerism and those engaged in it;
- There can be competition between organizations and NGOs resulting in duplication, waste and rivalry;
- Volunteerism is not recognized as a high priority. It is seen more as 'charity', causing dependency;
- There can be lack of accountability and transparency, in the state sector in particular;
- There are problems of sustainability once the volunteer assignment is finished;
- Poor documentation and dissemination of information on volunteer programmes undermines volunteer programmes and a targeted, focused and coordinated approach;
- There is often urban bias in programmes, with class bias in some selective areas;
- Lack of sufficient recognition/appreciation of volunteers and what they do and contribute;
- Insufficient research, promotion and publication.

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17 Hansen, J., 2001, "Volunteering in Kazakhstan, Key Findings of a National Survey", UNV COT Kazakhstan, Almaty, Kazakhstan
18 Russell, B., 2003, "The Contribution of the South African Volunteering Sector To Sustainable Development in that Country", UNDP, South Africa, page 12
19 UNV Sri Lanka, "Volunteerism In Sri Lanka, Case Study *For* International Year Of Volunteers (IYV)", September – November 2001, Sri Lanka, page 35

Due to the cultural, social and economic conditions of each country, some of the above-mentioned challenges are more pertinent than others. There is a need to delve deeper into the area of volunteerism and it impacts. Much of the studies on volunteerism do not go far enough in answering some critical questions such as, what is the effectiveness and sustainability of volunteer work and its contribution to achieving development targets. Despite the limitation and challenges faced by volunteerism in developing countries there are significant benefits. These benefits need to be more clearly identified and articulated in a research-based approach to volunteerism studies.

2.2.5   Volunteerism in Viet Nam

Volunteers can be found everywhere in Viet Nam: in economic or non-economic sectors, in cities or in the countryside, during a short event or over a lifetime, even with people who may not consider themselves volunteers, all working in different forms and in different activities. Regardless of the diverse perceptions and expressions of volunteerism, it is evident that the contribution of volunteers is significant and more and more widely recognized in the country.

Viet Nam has a tradition of volunteering throughout its history. The action of helping each other in difficulties is considered natural. The campaigns such as "Golden Week" or "Saving Rice Jar"[20] are good examples of volunteer activities to eradicate hunger during the resistance war in 1945 - 1954. Volunteer organizations were also formed during 1970-1975 with approximately 150 000 young volunteers[21]. These voluntary programmes brought great social and economic benefits to the country.

The concept of volunteerism is being developed and understood by young Vietnamese in its broad sense. A survey carried out by United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in Viet Nam in 2000 shows that the majority of Vietnamese understand the key defining characteristics of volunteering. Eighty-seven per cent of the total of 1,234 interviewees said, "Volunteering is an action of giving service for the benefits of others." Ninety per cent of them think that volunteering can be done at any age. Ninety-one per cent supported the idea that in volunteer activities, reward is not considered as the motivation[22]. Many people have a very positive opinion of volunteering activities and consider them of great social benefit.

Despite that, the terms "volunteer" and "volunteerism" are sometimes narrowly interpreted by segments of the Vietnamese population. According to some, volunteer activities are either carried out by unprofessional people or for political motives. The survey of UNV Viet Nam in 2000 revealed that, 17% of the interviewees consider volunteers as unprofessional/unskilled persons. Furthermore, 55% think that volunteering activities are carried out following the request by the employer/ governance body, e.g. on the occasion of Communist Labour Day[23]. A number of weaknesses still exist in the volunteer sector in Viet Nam, such as "heavy formality, loose co-ordination among organizations, and weak skills in training"[24].

Despite these weaknesses the situation is changing as more people are becoming involved in volunteering from a social point of view, rather than political obligation. The areas that are becoming increasingly supported by volunteers are, household economic

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20 These campaigns were launched by President Ho Chi Minh during the period of 1945 – 1954 when Viet Nam was facing serious hunger and a large budget deficit. He called on each Vietnamese to save one handful of rice every day, put it in a jar to help the hungry at the end of every week ("Saving Rice Jar"). The wealthy were also called on to voluntarily contribute gold to the national budget in this difficult period ("Golden Week").
21 "Brief History of Vietnam Volunteering" by Huu Nam – "Volunteers in Vietnam" – United Nations in Viet Nam – December 2001
22 Survey report on concepts of "volunteer", "volunteering" and "volunteerism" – UNV Viet Nam – 2000
23 Survey report on concepts of "volunteer", "volunteering" and "volunteerism" – UNV Viet Nam – 2000
24 "Brief History of Viet Nam Volunteering" by Huu Nam – "Volunteers in Viet Nam" – United Nations in Viet Nam – December 2001

development, healthcare, family planning services, caring for the aged and caring for disadvantaged children. Caring for the elderly in Vietnamese society is part of the cultural fabric and people do this as part of their daily lives. Other areas include relief and assistance for victims of disaster, people living with HIV/ AIDS, people living with disabilities and environmental protection.

Apart from covering a broadening range of sectors, volunteer activities are also becoming more and more organized with the active participation of many international and local organizations in Viet Nam. United Nations Volunteers has been active in Viet Nam since early 1990. As of 2004, the accumulative number of volunteers who have served in Viet Nam was more than 200[25]. UNV Viet Nam also promotes volunteerism through many local volunteer activities. Since early 1990, many other international volunteer organizations also sent their volunteers to Viet Nam. There are also many local organizations that support volunteering in Viet Nam[26]. Recently, many informal volunteer groups, especially youth volunteer groups are also contributing greatly to the volunteer movement in the country.

Vietnamese people have a strong moral philosophy of mutual assistance and helping people in need that was borne out of a history of war and reconstruction efforts. In this sense, one could find a volunteer in every Vietnamese person. Despite some narrow conceptions of volunteerism and the weaknesses of some volunteer activities, volunteerism in Viet Nam has developed considerably and contributed impressive social and economic benefits to the development of the country.

2.3   Local Capacity and Volunteerism

For the advancement of social, human and economic development it is essential for local or rural communities to be actively engaged or to participate in the processes of local decision-making and resource allocation which provides the basis of local ownership and hence, sustainability of the development process. Building local capacity is seen as essential for sustained progress toward the achievement of the MDGs. Underlying this argument is the belief that sustaining human development at a macro level depends on the local actor's capacity to actively participate in the development process at the local level. In that way, they become actively engaged in the process, as opposed to being passive recipients of development assistance.

Being involved in the decision-making, resource allocation and usage processes of government allows for the reflection and consideration of local needs. It is therefore important for local capacities to be developed so that local actors can engage and participate in these processes. The need to ensure a more balanced approach to economic and social development, improve regional disparities and better meet the needs of the local communities has placed a focus on the increasing role of sub-national government bodies and organizations in Viet Nam's development process. Policy development and the application of resources based on local needs and priorities are seen as important factors in the achievement of the MDGs across Viet Nam. The greater the distance from the political centre the less likelihood there is of a mix of public policies and resource allocation at the national level that will reflect the needs of the population in the more distant regions. Viet Nam is a country with very diverse development needs. Currently the sub-national levels of government are constrained by few resources and capacity, but the national government is making determined steps to allow for greater flexibility in determining the policy mix and resource allocation at these levels where local needs and demands are more clearly expressed.

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25 UN Volunteers in Viet Nam - Newsletter – Issue 5 May 2005
26 See more about these organizations in "Volunteers in Viet Nam" – United Nations in Viet Nam – December 2001

Although it is generally recognized that improved governance at local levels brought about by decentralized forms of government can have positive development outcomes (such as effective resource allocation and hence poverty alleviation), there remains a challenge for Viet Nam to effectively implement such a system. Lower levels of government do not always have sufficient capacity to manage. In some cases there are disparities from unit to unit, resulting in inefficiency. It is therefore important to recognize that capacity development at the local level may be needed to ensure more sustainable development outcomes, which will also assist in the pursuit of the MDGs.

Volunteerism is one way to develop local capacities for development[27]. Volunteerism can reduce dependency and promote empowerment. Volunteers are powerful resources to aid in the building of trust within and between communities. The contribution of volunteering is estimated to be between 8% and 14% of gross domestic product in countries where empirical studies exist[28]. As stated in section 2.2.2 volunteerism promotes participation, civic engagement, and the development of trust among citizens, which in broad terms is the building of social capital[29]. The building of social capital has positive development impacts at the community or 'local' level in terms of popular participation, democracy and local governance. Improving local capacity also increases the effectiveness of volunteerism. As a result, the impact of volunteerism on local capacity as well as on the impact of local capacity on volunteerism in Viet Nam is also investigated in this study.

2.4   UNV Programme's Strategic Directions in Viet Nam[30]

The United Nations Volunteers is a UN organization that supports sustainable human development globally through the promotion of volunteerism, including the mobilization of volunteers. It serves the causes of peace and development by enhancing opportunities for participation by all people. It is universal, inclusive and embraces volunteer action in all its diversity. It values free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity, which are the foundations of volunteerism.

In Viet Nam, UNV recruits and manages development specialists to work towards a better world as envisioned by the world's leaders in the Millennium Declaration. Specifically, these UN Volunteers assist in addressing Viet Nam's challenges in order to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals. In addition, UNV also develops projects in Viet Nam. These projects aim at promoting volunteerism among youth. Youth are the largest demographic group in Viet Nam and international studies have found that people who start volunteering when they are young are more likely to continue volunteering in adulthood. UNV particularly focuses on:

1. Education and training for disadvantaged youth;
2. Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA);
3. Natural and cultural heritage preservation; and
4. Information Communication Technology for Development.

UNV supports the initiatives of, and promotes networking among volunteer-involving organizations, volunteer groups and individual volunteers. This is done through public advocacy and awareness raising, capacity building and facilitating communication and interaction.
Volunteerism has the potential to complement government efforts to advance sustainable development, promote active participation and citizenship, build social networks, address

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27 UNDP, "Volunteerism and Development", Essentials, UNDP Evaluation Office, October 2003
28 UNDP, "Volunteerism and Development", Essentials, UNDP Evaluation Office, October 2003
29 Robert Putnam advanced this concept as the "features of social life – networks, norms, and trust – that enable participants to act together and more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (Putnam, 1995: 664-65)
30 Document on Strategic Directions for UNV in Viet Nam provided by the UNV Programme, Ha Noi

and advance shared initiatives, and contribute to the personal growth and development of the volunteer. A focus should be on developing partnerships between government, civil society and the private sector to build on the spirit of volunteerism that exists in society to create a dynamic partnership that can address economic and social goals. The nature of volunteerism can be quite different across countries since it is shaped by local customs and traditions. There are four factors[31] that are acknowledged as critical in advancing volunteerism in development, which are outlined below. The combination of these factors will create an infrastructure that supports an environment needed to mobilize and facilitate volunteerism for development.

Factor 1 - Establishing a Common Understanding of Volunteerism and How It Is Valued in the Local Context

This can be done through promoting public dialogue and discussion on volunteerism to reach a common understanding of volunteerism and to examine its value for national development goals. A shared understanding begins with conversations among stakeholders – government, civil society, and the private sector. Added to this, the dissemination of information on volunteerism and the actions of volunteers stimulates public awareness and promotes its value for social and human development. Furthermore it is important to document and research local volunteerism since it can demonstrate the benefits of volunteering and provide valuable information for policy makers and the public.

Factor 2 - Creating an Enabling Environment to Foster and Support Volunteer Actions

Public policies and legal frameworks can facilitate participation and by reducing potential barriers, it can encourage people to be involved in volunteerism. It is therefore important to create a National Volunteering Framework, which, among other things, can integrate volunteerism into national development goals and establish the framework for legislative actions that support volunteerism. It is also important to promote and recognize volunteerism for development, which may include creating opportunities for contributions to government programmes and establishing funding priorities for volunteerism within government budgets. Furthermore, it is important to provide leadership for volunteerism by making it part of government policy and actively supporting volunteer programmes.

Factor 3 - Designing Volunteer Schemes to Encourage Pluralistic Mobilizations of Volunteers and Their Effective Management

This can be done by expanding opportunities for volunteerism for development; developing schemes and creating partnerships that facilitate diversity and pluralism, and the effective management and coordination of volunteers.

Factor 4 - Developing Sustainable Resources for Long-term Financial Viability of Volunteers for Development

It is essential to ensure adequate resources to support and promote volunteerism and its enabling environment. This will include securing long-term funding and documenting the results of volunteerism and its impacts, which can justify sustained support for volunteer programmes. Public/private partnerships can be used to attract more resources for volunteer initiatives. It is essential, therefore, for the various development actors in society to coordinate and cooperate to ensure volunteerism is nurtured as a strategy for sustainable human development.

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31 UNV, "Developing a Volunteer Infrastructure, a Guidance Note", UNV, 2005

3. STUDY DESIGN

The study's methodology is detailed in Appendix B. In summary, the study used a multiple-case design. Data were collected from a variety of sources. Survey questionnaires were used to collect information from the participants. The volunteer sending agencies (VSAs) were the first contact points to obtain lists of volunteers. The volunteers were then identified and contacted. They served as the contact point for the volunteer involving organizations (VIOs) and beneficiaries. The organizations were asked to provide contact information for the local authorities and the volunteers' beneficiaries. Information obtained at each contact point was briefly evaluated to identify the need for follow-up and whether to proceed to the next step. Follow-up at this stage was only done if it was deemed necessary by the researchers based on the quality of the information provided.

Six separate survey questionnaires were developed for different groups of participants including international volunteers, national volunteers, VSAs, VIOs, local authorities, and beneficiaries. The questionnaires were designed so that pertinent aspects could be cross-evaluated between relevant parties. The surveys were first distributed to a few participants to evaluate the quality of the survey questions. Based on these responses, they were then modified to better capture relevant information. Follow up questionnaires were also developed as the study progressed.

The focus of the analysis was on the contribution of the volunteer as perceived by all available stakeholders. The number of available stakeholders might be different in each case. However, triangulation of perceptions was treated the same for all cases regardless which stakeholders had commented. If all available stakeholders were in agreement with their perceptions of the contribution of the volunteer, a linkage could be identified. If conflicting results were identified, follow-up with the stakeholder who provided conflicting information with that provided by the volunteer was needed to further explore the cause. If a cause was identified, an attempt was made to reconcile the disagreement. A linkage was not recognized if reconciliation could not be accomplished. This process of triangulation was the foundation for identifying linkages between volunteerism and the achievement of the MDGs.

It was planned to identify at least two cases to represent each MDG and the information on the contribution of the volunteers needed to be available from at least three different stakeholders. However, due to lack of responses from participants, it was not possible to have two cases for each MDG. Thus, the plan was modified to investigate the linkage between volunteerism and the achievement of the MDGs for cases with available information from the volunteer and at least one other stakeholder (such as the Volunteer Involving Organization or the beneficiary, for example).

The contribution of volunteerism in building local capacities at sub-national levels of government or local organizations was evaluated based on the assessment from the volunteers and local authorities. These two parties did not need to be related. Observations were grouped into, type of assistance and levels of government or organizations. Attempts were made to identify the levels of capacity building where volunteerism appeared to have impacted in general and on specific MDGs, where

possible. Similarly, the impact of local capacities on volunteerism was also examined. Attempts were made to identify factors or constraints that limit the contribution of the volunteers at the local levels and central levels. The assessment focused on the characteristics of civil society and decentralization in Viet Nam.

Recommendations from the participants were summarized to provide recommendations to the Vietnamese government and development actors. The assessment of volunteerism in relation to capacity building was also used to make recommendations to policy makers.

4. RESULTS

In some cases there was a direct and easily identifiable contribution from the volunteer towards the achievement of a particular MDG. There were other volunteer efforts, however, where the contribution was not as easily identifiable or as direct from the surveys. They may have a longer term or indirect impact. This does not detract from their importance or the extent of the contribution. Since the surveys were based on the participants' perceptions, subjectivities can be argued. It is not within the scope of this study to evaluate these perceptions. Thus, the data were reported as closely to the original responses as possible. Where relevant information could not be drawn directly from the responses, it was reported based on the researcher's interpretation of the participants' responses. Measurement of a volunteer's contribution and the exact nature of the impact in terms of development outcomes is a challenge in itself and will need to be studied in more depth. This study took more of an exploratory approach to measuring volunteer impact.

Nine volunteers were identified with adequate information provided from the participants to draw valuable conclusions. Of the nine volunteers three were male and six were female. Five of the volunteers worked with government agencies, one with an NGO and three worked with aid organizations. Eight of them were international volunteers. From these, six cases present contributions from individual volunteers and one case presents a combination of similar contributions made by three volunteers. Three cases contain responses from the associated VIOs and VSAs. Responses from beneficiaries were only available from the combined case. Thus, linkage analysis was only conducted for these three cases. No responses were available from local authorities. The limitations experienced in terms of the number and type (e.g. local authority, beneficiary etc.) of participants highlights the limitations of the type of study carried out. The challenge faced in this study was the 'virtual' nature of the research. 'Face to face' interviews and follow-up questions with interpretation would have been a more thorough approach. The lack of knowledge or understanding of volunteerism or the objectives of the study may have also contributed to beneficiaries' or local authorities' low level of participation. Engagement with participants in a face-to-face manner would have limited this constraint and provided richer data. The responses on each case are summarized below.

Section 4.1 presents the contributions of volunteers toward achieving the MDGs by case. Section 4.2 presents the contributions of volunteers to building local capacities as well as the impact of local capacity on the contributions of the volunteers for the cases with available data. The factors that enhanced or limited the contributions of the volunteers are presented in Section 4.3. The volunteers mentioned several similar factors and so they are presented collectively rather than as one specific case.

4.1 Contributions of Volunteers toward Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

4.1.1 Case 1 – Participatory Planning Support Specialist
4.1.1.1 Description

The volunteer was a project management and participatory planning support specialist. The volunteer provided technical assistance in support of the participatory planning and decision-making processes for stakeholders including communities and local government

involved in a rural development project. The assignment focused on providing support in building capacity at the local level through decentralization of decision-making processes and encouraging social mobilization.

Specifically, the tasks included:

- enhancing capacities of the community facilitators, commune development board members and the project management unit at the village level;
- adopting decentralization and social mobilization tools and techniques for project development and implementation with community members;
- preparation of provincial decentralization regulations and guidelines to be utilized by the project team;
- monitoring of training activities, especially those related to the beneficiaries, ensuring that they were conducted according to local needs and that sufficient monitoring and evaluation of the quality of these training programmes is ensured;
- introducing successful social mobilization, participation and income generation practices from the region and elsewhere;
- collating "Best Practices" of social mobilization as tested in the pilot communes and replicating them in other communes;
- introducing methodologies to target poor people in the community;
- decentralization of the commune development fund at the villages and commune levels; and
- working closely with the commune facilitators (many of whom were women) and community development board members to provide hands-on guidance in organizing social mobilization activities in close coordination with the district and project micro credit development board members.

4.1.1.2 Findings

Surveys were returned from the volunteer and associated VIO and VSA. The volunteer identified contributions to MDGs 1, 3, 7, and 8 and MDGs 1, 2, and 3 were identified by the VSA. The VIO did not directly specify the volunteer's contribution to any particular MDG. However, they acknowledged the volunteer's contribution to the local counterparts as well as beneficiaries. This was achieved through supporting and empowering communities to participate in the decision-making and resource allocation process. New skills and exposure to participatory techniques also increased their ability to actively participate in this way in the future (with limited external assistance, which is important for sustainability). Follow-up with the volunteer was not possible; thus, the difference in perception of volunteer and VSA was not reconciled. It can be concluded however that a linkage was suggested for the contribution of the volunteer to MDGs 1 and 3. The survey results from the participants are detailed in the appendices.

4.1.2   Case 2 – Project Coordinator
4.1.2.1 Description

The volunteer was a project coordinator for a Vietnamese NGO assisting children to stay in school when they were likely to cease their education due to difficult economic conditions of the family. The main beneficiaries of this project were street children. The project was designed to first build trust and credibility between the NGO and the children and then to introduce them to opportunities for training, education and employment.

4.1.2.2 Findings

The survey was returned from the volunteer only. It was therefore not possible to conduct

the linkage analysis for the volunteer's contribution to the achievement of MDGs. The volunteer indicated that his contribution was relevant to the achievement of MDGs 1 and 2. This was achieved through assisting street children to return to the education system or to learn practical skills to allow them to become employed and support themselves and contribute to their family's overall income. Fighting poverty and participating in the education system was the result of this programme and the work of this volunteer. The survey results from the volunteer are detailed in the appendices. No issue pertaining to local capacities was raised.

4.1.3 Case 3 – Food Safety Specialist
4.1.3.1 Description

The volunteer was a food safety specialist involved in building the capacity of the VIO in relation to food safety. The volunteer was involved in assisting the development of food safety analysis focusing on high-risk foods and contaminants of public health significance; supporting the development of standard protocols for food safety testing; supporting the training of human resources for the network laboratories and conduct programmes on the use and maintenance of selected equipment; assisting in the procurement and installation of equipment in the network laboratories; developing procedures for the laboratories which address sampling, registration, testing, storage, and disposal of samples; developing systems for reporting and follow-up of regulatory and/or administrative actions when the results of analysis are completed; developing indicators to monitor and evaluate laboratory performance; and liaising with other laboratory networks in Viet Nam to assist in the ongoing development of national analytical capacity.

4.1.3.2 Findings

Surveys were returned from the volunteer and associated VSA and beneficiary. The volunteer provided training and assistance to the staff at the VIO; thus, the direct beneficiary was also the VIO in this case. The volunteer and beneficiary did not specifically identify the MDGs for the volunteer's contribution. The VSA reported that the contribution of the volunteer could be attributed to the achievement of MDGs 4 and 6. Interpretation of the survey results from the volunteer and beneficiary indicated that the contributions of the volunteer were relevant to the achievement of MDGs 4 and 6. This was done specifically through providing advice and capacity-building to the government agency that is responsible for promoting food safety and minimizing disease through oral-fecal transmission mechanisms, which invariably has a larger impact on children. Thus, it can be concluded that the volunteer contributed to the achievement of MDGs 4 and 6. The survey results from the participants are detailed in the appendices.

4.1.4 Case 4 – Drug and Crime Project Coordinator
4.1.4.1 Description

The volunteer was engaged as a project coordinator with a drugs and crime related project. The volunteer was involved in interventions that targeted drug users with rehabilitation programmes and strategies to combat addiction, HIV/AIDS and the economic and social impacts of drug abuse.

4.1.4.2 Findings

The survey was returned from the volunteer only. It was therefore not possible to conduct the linkage analysis for the volunteer's contribution to the achievement of MDGs. The volunteer indicated that his contribution was indirectly relevant to the achievement of MDGs 1, 3, and 6. The programme that the volunteer was involved in supported and assisted one of the most vulnerable groups (vulnerable to poverty) in the community. Supporting the rehabilitation of drug users addresses issues of poverty, gender and

diseases related to drug use. The work of this volunteer helped to address the imbalance in the impacted families in terms of the inequitable distribution of labour and financial responsibility on women. Women are adversely impacted since most drug users are male. The survey results from the volunteer are detailed in the appendices.

4.1.5   Case 5 – Environment Conservation Specialist
4.1.5.1 Description

The volunteer worked with the Yok Don National Park, in developing and building capacity of the park officials, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the local communities on how to better manage the park and its resources to ensure environmental sustainability. The volunteer was involved in the establishment of an information centre which promoted awareness on environmental conservation for tourists and local people; assisting in the development of tourist and information centre regulations in order to better manage the park and improve cooperation with the local people for environmental conservation; improving conservation and environmental sustainability awareness through education activities at the information centre and at local schools; and assisting park officials and staff in improving conservation management capacity and addressing local concerns in resource management.

4.1.5.2 Findings

The survey was returned from the volunteer only. It was therefore not possible to conduct the linkage analysis for the volunteer's contribution to the achievement of MDGs. The volunteer indicated that the main contribution related to achieving MDG 7. Ensuring local people were considered in the decision-making process allowed them to perceive themselves as partners in this process and hence empowered them in making environmentally sustainable choices. The survey results from the volunteer are detailed in the appendices.

4.1.6   Case 6 – Physical Therapist
4.1.6.1 Description

The volunteer provided medical care to local people and provided training to physical therapists through the Ministry of Health. This volunteer worked with the disabled and assisted and trained medical practitioners who work with the disabled.

4.1.6.2 Findings

The survey was returned from the volunteer only. It was therefore not possible to conduct the linkage analysis for the volunteer's contribution to the achievement of MDGs. The volunteer identified her/his main contributions as relevant to achieving MDGs 3, 4, 5, and 6. The main contribution was to improve health services and hence reducing mortality of disabled children. This also applied to women with disabilities and women during their pregnancy. The survey results from the volunteer are detailed in the appendices. No issue pertaining to local capacities was raised.

4.1.7   Case 7 – Combined English and French Teachers Case
4.1.7.1 Description

Several cases of English and French teachers were provided. These cases are presented as one because of their similarities in functions and contributions. These volunteers were placed as teachers in universities. The focus of their work was to build the capacity of their students in terms of language skills. The main tasks these volunteers performed included improving the teaching capacity of the teachers through the provision of ongoing training which involved guiding teachers through the process of evaluating the needs of the learners, creating a course that meets these needs, implementing the course in an

effective way, curriculum development workshops for the faculty of foreign languages, improving the students' ability to conduct research in the foreign languages, and improving the graduate students' ability to investigate topics on development issues in the foreign languages. The beneficiaries of these volunteers were primary and secondary teachers. Improving their skills and raising standards in their approach to teaching has an impact on the students they in turn teach at school. At least half of the beneficiaries of the volunteers were women. Furthermore by having gender awareness lessons incorporated into the training it was an effective way of promoting gender issues, which then can be subsequently practiced in the classrooms of these Vietnamese teachers. The learning of foreign languages allows the beneficiaries and the students they in turn teach an ability to participate in a global society.

4.1.7.2 Findings

Surveys were returned from three volunteers and their associated VIOs, VSAs, and beneficiaries. The volunteers indicated that their contributions were directly and indirectly relevant to achieving MDGs 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8. The VIOs and beneficiaries did not specify the MDGs these volunteers directly contributed to. However, they acknowledged the positive impact the volunteers made on the organizations, their professional knowledge, and the value of cultural exchange. One VSA indicated that the achievements of the volunteers were relevant to the achievement of MDGs 3 and 8. Another VSA attributed the contribution of the volunteer to MDG 2. Thus, a linkage can be suggested for the contribution of the volunteers to the achievements of MDG 2, 3, and 8. The survey results from the volunteers, VIOs, VSAs, and beneficiaries are presented in the appendices. No issue pertaining to local capacities was raised.

4.1.8   Concluding Remarks

Although there were some challenges to the methodology used and the desired outcomes in terms of the quantity of the data and information collected, it is possible to draw some conclusions from this study. It is possible to conclude that volunteers in Viet Nam do indeed make significant contributions to the achievement of the MDGs in their various roles and capacities. Some volunteers may make a more significant contribution than others and this could be a result of the situation in which they are placed. The situation for each volunteer varies amongst volunteer placements, much of which is outside the volunteer's control. Volunteers could possibly make more direct or more visible contributions if their engagement and placement was more targeted, part of an overall approach or countrywide strategy and integrated into government development strategies and approaches. Therefore there is scope to increase and maximize the contribution of volunteerism to the MDGs and therefore to national development.

4.2   Local Capacities and Volunteerism

Not all volunteer activities described above had a direct impact on local capacities. Nevertheless, all of the volunteers' contributions revolved around improving living conditions, which in return strengthen the local capacities for further improvement. There were some assignments that specifically targeted local capacity issues. In others the impact on local capacity was indirect or incidental. For the assignments that specifically targeted local capacity issues it was still difficult through this study to accurately measure the impact on development outcomes at this level. From this study, data on the contribution to local capacities are available for Cases 1, 3, 4 and 5 as presented below.

4.2.1   Case 1 – Participatory Planning Support Specialist

The volunteer indicated that local capacity to implement decentralized activities was weak. As the volunteer's assignment was specifically oriented to developing local capacity in

participation and social mobilization, the volunteer contributed to building this capacity at sub-national levels of government and local organizations or community groups. The contribution was considered to have an impact on strengthening social mobilization and decentralization. This contribution was also recognized by the VIO.

According to the VSA, local capacity to manage international volunteers is weak. The lack of local capacity in working with international volunteers was evidenced by the difficulties the volunteer faced at the beginning of the assignment with obtaining permission from local authorities for accommodation (bureaucratic 'red tape' and delays) and clarifying the expectations from the local partners (as there were differences between the expectations of the local partners and the VSA). However, all difficulties were eventually resolved.

Sustainability of the volunteer's contribution was considered to be high as the volunteer's assignment was a part of a larger project that was approved by the local government and supported by an international development organization.

4.2.2   Case 3 – Food Safety Specialist

The volunteer's assignment involved selected provincial laboratories and preventive medicine centers. These centers benefited from a survey study on laboratory activities, a food borne disease surveillance project, and workshops. This allowed new concepts and ideas to be presented to the Vietnamese counterparts and enhanced the centers' capacity to conduct evaluation on food safety.

The volunteer indicated that the currently required functions of the VIO were sufficient. However, there was a need for more human resources and for strengthening some skills. More emphasis should be placed on the strengthening of local capacity with support in skills development and human resource management and development capacity of the VIO at the central level. This builds local capacity as well as supports the capacity of the central agency, which should allow transference and support to the decentralized laboratories and medical centers at provincial level.

According to the VSA, local capacity to manage international volunteers is weak. However, no specific local capacity issue was raised that prevented the volunteer from fulfilling the assigned tasks. The volunteer's contribution appeared to be sustainable by utilizing the "train-the-trainers" approach; the volunteer was able to transfer some fresh insights in professional issues to the local staff.

4.2.3   Case 4 – Drug and Crime Project Coordinator

The programme involved local community leaders and government officials in training and awareness that allowed them to gain a fuller understanding of the issues and problems. The approach to training, support and awareness was to make them appropriate to the local situation, which enhances the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of HIV and drug abuse prevention efforts. The volunteer's contribution provided local counterparts access to the most recent information on the issue, which assisted in strengthening their effectiveness. The project was perceived to be sustainable at the end of the volunteer's assignment.

Local capacity was mentioned by the volunteer to be low for the local authority to carry out its required function. Local capacity needed to be built up before other issues could be addressed adequately. The illiteracy of local leaders and inhabitants was perceived as problematic hindering the volunteer in carrying out the assigned tasks effectively. The programme therefore also focused on providing education materials, which were designed for low literate or illiterate audiences.

4.2.4 Case 5 - Environment Conservation Specialist

This volunteer was responsible for building the capacity of local communities to conserve natural resources and to manage them in a sustainable manner and assisting in the promotion of environmental sustainability and management techniques. The process of including local stakeholders in the decision-making or resource allocation process allows local partners to feel park management is considering their needs. This increases mutual understanding, which fosters more cooperative relationships and park officials are more aware of the impact of their decisions and how this affects local people and the environment in which they live.

4.2.5 Concluding Remarks

To assess volunteer contributions to the building of local capacities requires more detailed information from the beneficiaries and an analysis of the outcomes of the particular volunteer's work. At this stage the evidence is at best anecdotal but one could still argue that there is a strong possibility that local capacities are being developed which is likely to have a positive impact on development outcomes (i.e. progressing towards the achievement of the MDGs). This would need to be verified in a more detailed study however.

4.3 Factors that Enhanced or Limited the Effectiveness of Volunteerism

This section presents the factors commented on by the volunteers, VSAs, VIOs and beneficiaries that enhance or negate the effectiveness of volunteerism. Due to the similarities of comments, the factors are presented collectively from all of the participants rather than by specific case. All of the factors stated by the participants are presented and each of the participants provided insight into their impact on the effectiveness of volunteerism from different perspectives.

Several factors, which are perceived to have an impact on the effectiveness of volunteerism, emerged from the responses to the survey. The factors are interdependent and were either supporting or negating the effectiveness of volunteerism in tandem. They also had a positive or negative impact on one another. The factors affected the effectiveness of volunteerism in varying degrees. Presence or lack of these factors determined whether the volunteers' skills were employed to the fullest extent possible, as well as the extent of their contributions.

4.3.1 Collaboration Issues

All of the participants stated that collaboration among all of the involved parties played a significant role in the success of the volunteer assignments. Lack of collaboration between any of the parties decreased the volunteer's contributions to the VIOs and beneficiaries. Three VSAs reported that support from central and local authorities was crucial for an assignment to be legally recognized by the government. Employing international volunteers in Viet Nam is heavily regulated by the government and without support from central and local authorities, it was not possible for international agencies or individuals to participate in volunteering or for VIOs to receive volunteers. Involvement of local authorities in the volunteer assignments varied depending on the nature of the assignments. Assignments related to development work required more support from local authorities than assignments of teachers of foreign languages, for example.

In all seven cases, the volunteers served as the trainers or specialists of the VIOs. The nature of the contributions of the volunteers suggested that the staff at the VIOs were also the beneficiaries of the volunteers' professional knowledge and experiences. It was also through the VIOs that the beneficiaries benefited from the volunteers' contributions as contact with the beneficiaries was often facilitated through the VIOs. Three VSAs and two

VIOs indicated that requests for volunteers to provide technical support, which the VIOs either lacked or did not have the capacity to fulfill frequently came from the VIOs. As both the VSAs and the VIOs were involved in initiating the volunteer assignment, it was important that the two parties collaborated in developing terms of reference or objectives for the assignment and were flexible to modify them with the involvement of the volunteer as the assignment evolved. However, too many changes in plans could result in substantial deviation from the purposes of the assignment and could be outside of the volunteer's skills to perform the requested tasks. A clear understanding from the VIOs of their needs and their objectives of utilizing volunteers was fundamental for the VSAs to provide volunteers with appropriate skill sets and for the volunteers to provide the VIOs with the assistance they needed.

4.3.2   Communication Issues

Open and effective communication, development of trust, and sensitivity to Vietnamese culture and tradition were identified by the nine volunteers, two VSAs (out of three), and three VIOs (out of three) as important factors that significantly affected the level of collaboration between the volunteer and the VIO. Effective communication was essential for the VSAs to communicate their missions to the VIOs to ensure the volunteers helped the agencies to achieve their missions. One of the common missions of the VSAs was bridge-building with the VIOs, such as promoting understanding and diplomacy between the VSAs' host country and the VIOs in addition to providing technical support. Yet this mission sometimes was not communicated clearly to the VIOs, who could raise some reservations toward the purposes of the assignments and the abilities of the volunteers to perform the assigned tasks. One VIO mentioned that it expected a volunteer to have extensive technical experiences in the field rather than someone with limited experiences with a great potential for bridge-building which is sometimes the expectation of the VSA. If these differences in requirements were not communicated clearly between the VSAs and the VIOs, the volunteers would be put in a position where they have to make great efforts to overcome the reservation of the VIOs toward their abilities and purposes. This was sometimes a set back and affected the effectiveness of the volunteers.

Communication was also essential to establish trust and positive working relationships. As mentioned by three VSAs, communication was especially important for the international VSAs and volunteers to gain trust and positive working relationships with their Vietnamese counterparts. Interaction between Vietnamese and foreigners is limited in rural areas, where volunteers are needed the most. Understanding and sensitivity towards Vietnamese culture and tradition helped build a positive working relationship between the international VSAs and volunteers and their Vietnamese partners. A strong hierarchical social system, and similar aspects of Vietnamese tradition, were sometimes perceived as obstacles to initiate and implement needed changes, as stated by two volunteers. In addition, one volunteer said that individualism is viewed less positively in Vietnamese culture than in western culture. These differences can generate conflicts, disappointment and mistrust from his/her Vietnamese counterparts, and frustration for volunteers with a strong sense of individualism. Cross-cultural training was considered an important element of international volunteer training programmes to lessen the cultural differences. In addition to external factors, two volunteers mentioned that self-motivation and willingness to integrate into the system in Viet Nam helped the volunteers to adapt and thus be more effective.

4.3.3   Capacity Issues

Language barriers, gaps in technical skills, lack of resources, and weak local capacities (e.g. resistance or slow adaptation to change; lack of sustainability) were also considered by five volunteers and three VSAs as obstacles for volunteers to contribute their technical skills to their highest potential. Language barriers could exclude volunteers from work-related tasks or providing effective input without the use of an interpreter, as mentioned by

three international volunteers. Gaps in technical skills and weak local capacities can hamper the contributions of volunteers especially if they were not familiar with the working environment in developing countries. Sustainability of the volunteers' contributions varied. Four volunteers, who worked with large development organizations such as the UN agencies or where their assignments were part of the agencies' projects, indicated their contributions were more likely to be sustained while those who initiated a project or volunteered with small organizations indicated that their contributions were less likely to be sustainable. Weak capacity (in terms of sufficiently-trained local staff or the limited level of resources to follow up on the work, for example) was suggested as the major contributor to this non-sustainability.

4.3.4 Volunteer Support

Eight volunteers stated that support from the VSAs and the VIOs was important for the volunteers to feel part of the workplace and to give a degree of legitimacy to their contributions. Volunteers functioned better when they felt accepted into the community. Not enough support from the VIOs was also stated as being a significant constraining factor. In these cases the exact position or status of the volunteer within the VIO was unclear, especially if the VIO had not had prior experience or contact with volunteers. The VIOs had realized the need for technical assistance but they did not know exactly what type of assistance they required and hence, might not have involved a volunteer with the most appropriate skills for the task at hand. This is an intangible factor whose causes were not clearly discernable.

Some reasons that may be postulated to contribute to this negative impact were ineffective communication, limited human and material resources, misconception of volunteerism, bureaucratic system, not having a clear understanding of the VIOs' needs and volunteers' needs, and slow recognition of required changes. Strong support from the VSAs was considered to be necessary, especially for international volunteers. The presence of in-country field coordinators appeared to be beneficial. The coordinators might act as advisors, counselors, and mentors for the volunteers. The coordinators needed to be knowledgeable in the areas to which the volunteers were assigned and be readily available to support the VIOs and volunteers when needed. Networking among volunteers was also considered beneficial for information exchange and support such as how to approach an issue or how to access resources. Directly working with beneficiaries was viewed positively to reduce misunderstanding their needs and increase collaboration.

4.3.5 Perceptions

Three volunteers mentioned that perceptions of volunteerism were not always positive with regards to the volunteers' abilities to contribute. Lack of volunteer management support and inaccurate expectations led to under utilization of volunteers, as stated by one volunteer or over utilization of volunteers as stated by three volunteers. Highly specialized international VIOs or VSAs were more realistic or less demanding of the abilities of the volunteers while some of the Vietnamese VIOs expected the volunteers to accomplish tasks beyond the volunteer's experience, skills or abilities.

4.3.6 Promotion and Awareness

There were differences in volunteer promotion when targeting the international community or the Vietnamese national community. It was not feasible to make a detailed comparison between the two communities, however, due to significantly different characteristics of the two communities. General findings suggest that promotion and awareness of voluntary activities was stronger in the international community with a higher degree of commitment. Despite the continuing efforts of the Vietnamese government to promote volunteerism among Vietnamese, there was inadequate support for and interest in local groups, as

mentioned by one volunteer. Several universities, as well as youth clubs, have volunteer programmes to promote volunteerism among students. Some of these organizations may have a narrow perception of what volunteerism is. Some organizations promoted volunteerism for political purposes rather than for direct social benefits. This had a negative impact on the volunteers' commitment and interest. For both international and national communities, financial incentives and family and career obligations were seen as barriers for people to volunteer especially for long-term assignments.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Government and Development Agencies

It is important that the Vietnamese Government and international and Vietnamese development agencies recognize the impact of volunteerism and its potential role in their development strategies. Mobilization and involvement of volunteers could be integrated into the agencies' human resource system. Volunteer promotion through education, mass media and communication, and advocacy to support volunteerism for development is needed at the central and local levels. Volunteerism should not only be promoted and encouraged for political purposes, it should be promoted in a diversity of forms for its social and economic benefits. It is also important that local authorities are informed of the legal support they can provide to volunteers, VSAs, and VIOs and the importance and necessity of their support. All the international VSAs and VIOs interviewed acknowledged strong support from the government for the respective international volunteer programmes. This positive support should be maintained at the highest level.

A more systematic coordination of volunteers and volunteer promotion is needed. A centralized system to coordinate, oversee, and support voluntary activities will increase the effectiveness of balancing the supply and demand of volunteers. A National Volunteer Centre could be set up to coordinate and support voluntary activities for both local and international volunteers. It could also conduct research or carry out surveys that provide data and information that can be used to measure the impact of volunteerism and, in turn, be used to inform policy and to serve as a promotion and advocacy tool. This centre would ideally be set up with strong support from several voluntary organizations and should have strong links to the Government and the private sector. This centre would also be able to provide resources and training in volunteer management. For international volunteers it could provide induction, language training, and cultural orientation services (for a fee). The international VSAs could also provide technical and voluntary services to such a Centre.

5.2 Volunteer Sending Agencies

For international VSAs, having in-country volunteer coordinators who are knowledgeable of working and living conditions in Viet Nam is essential to support volunteers. The coordinators also play a significant role in developing a good working relationship between the VSA and the VIO. Regular meetings between the volunteers and the coordinators are recommended for the volunteers to receive regular feedback and support. Support should be provided throughout the duration of the assignments, especially for those who carry out assignments in areas far from the VSAs' main offices. Mission statements and objectives of the volunteers' assignments need to be communicated in their entirety to the VIOs to prevent misunderstanding and increase collaboration. Cross-cultural training and explanation of working conditions in Viet Nam need to be provided to the volunteers before they start their assignments. Besides providing technical support, international VSAs also need to recognize their significant roles in the development process of Viet Nam. Their presence plays an important part in breaking down barriers and misconceptions perceived by Vietnamese towards foreigners caused by cultural misunderstanding.

The roles and functions of national VSAs are not clear from this study since no national VSA participated in the survey. However, from the responses from national volunteers, national VSAs seem to have a limited understanding of volunteerism and are rather weak in their capacities to organize and supply volunteers to the VIOs. Much support and training is needed to develop strong national VSAs as these agencies have a lot of potential to effectively facilitate and promote volunteerism among Vietnamese communities. It is also important to ensure that international VSAs are coordinated in some way so that their work does not overlap or conflict with the development priorities of the host country. Competition among VSAs for example could be a negative factor in volunteerism. A number of the VSAs appeared not to involve in information sharing with other VSAs. Synergies need to be developed among the various VSAs and the development objectives of the Vietnamese government. How VSAs and their organizational objectives can be aligned with a country's overall development objectives should be investigated. Collaboration and experience sharing should be encouraged among VSAs.

VSAs are often the bridge between the VIOs and volunteers. The VSAs' mission, strategy, and goals are important for promoting volunteerism for development. In some cases, a focus on the quantity of volunteers placed by the VSA compromises the quality of the assignment (volunteer skills matched closely with VIO requirements). Efforts should be made to design terms of references that reflect the individual assignments as realistically as possible. The process should be a collaborative effort between the VSA, VIO, and volunteer and be flexible to modification as needed within a certain framework that does not go beyond the capacities of any of the parties. This will require more time to place a volunteer, but according to the participants of this study, it would be more beneficial for the VIO in the long run. The VSAs need to work closely with the VIOs to understand their needs and motivation for requesting volunteers.

5.3 Volunteer Involving Organizations and Beneficiaries

Volunteer Involving Organizations, as well as beneficiaries, need to clearly identify their needs and how volunteers can assist them to reach their goals. This is especially important when involving international volunteers. The VIOs must be proactive in designing objectives for the volunteer assignments to ensure that their goals will be reached with assistance from the volunteers. The VIOs should also be realistic in what they request from the volunteers. It should be recognized by the VIOs that it may take some time for international volunteers to learn to adapt to the VIOs' working environment and Vietnamese culture. At least one staff member from the VIO should be dedicated to assist or mentor the volunteer in cultural or social issues when needed.

VIOs also need to be open to changes and to embrace them when needed. Lack of resources, technical skills, and limited capacities can sometimes prevent the VIOs from seeing how changes can impact their organizations. The pace of change may be threatening to the VIO but it may not be fast enough for the volunteer. Sometimes volunteers expect to 'change the world' and indeed there may be avenues to make significant changes in an organization, but this needs to be put into the framework of the organization and its environment. An open working relationship and a non-threatening, communicative environment should be encouraged for the volunteers to share their ideas with staff of the VIOs. They should keep an open mind to work through their difficulties with the volunteers to evaluate how the volunteers can contribute to the organization to the fullest extent. The VIOs also need to have a strategy to sustain the volunteers' contribution when their assignments end. They can be guided in doing so by the VSA or the volunteer at the beginning of the volunteer placement. Professional information and experience exchange between the VIOs and the volunteers should be encouraged to promote the sustainable capacity development of both.

5.4 Volunteers

Volunteers play the most significant role in the success of the assignment. Volunteers need to be well-prepared for the VIOs or beneficiaries they are providing their services to, rather than expecting the VIOs or beneficiaries to adapt to their working styles and ethics. International volunteers need to be willing to integrate themselves into the Vietnamese society and working environment. Willingness to learn Vietnamese, understand the Vietnamese culture, adapt to the working conditions, and be patient with the sometimes slow pace of needed changes will significantly help the volunteers to communicate with their Vietnamese counterparts. The volunteers also need to be realistic in their goals. However, they should not lower their goals because of obstacles they may encounter, but rather search for realistic ways to overcome these obstacles.

Volunteers need to recognize their roles in volunteer promotion and contributing to society by engendering community participation, civic engagement, and increasing social harmony. International volunteers should also recognize their presence in Viet Nam as a means to breaking down misconceptions and barriers caused by cultural misunderstandings and history, as opposed to just providing technical support. Volunteering can be a whole life experience and this richness can benefit both the volunteer and the people who come into contact with the volunteer during the placement.

6. LESSONS LEARNED AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Lessons Learned from the Approach and Methodology

A team of three online volunteers conducted this case study. It is itself a case study of the effectiveness of online volunteers. Teamwork and frequent communication between the team members was essential to complete the project after one-and-a-half years. This was much longer than anticipated. In addition, different backgrounds and experiences of the volunteers, including one of the volunteers living in Viet Nam, provided a unique set of complementary skills.

While the case study provides much useful information, it has several limitations. The case study was conducted using the survey approach to gather information via online communication. This approach, on one hand gave the participants the ability to respond at their convenience. On the other hand, it did not allow for in-depth follow-up and clarification. In addition, it excluded the population of volunteers who had no access to online communication. The survey approach conducted from a distance makes it difficult in the follow-up process. Added to this, the participants often did not return the survey forms and constant reminders were required; thus it was a time consuming exercise, which resulted in varying levels of data quality. Face-to-face interviews are more effective where issues can be clarified directly, nuances can be understood or confirmed, and certain pertinent points can be pursued in more detail.

The population of volunteers asked to participate was identified mostly through international VSAs. Thus, the sample studied does not necessarily represent a random sample from the volunteer population. This is reflected in a larger number of cases of international volunteers than Vietnamese national volunteers. In addition, identifying volunteers through international VSAs might lead to misinterpreting the national volunteer movement in Viet Nam. National volunteers are not often involved with a VSA. Lack of other types of volunteers, such as short-term volunteers, also provides a biased picture of the contribution of volunteers. However, it was difficult to involve this type of volunteer, as their assignments were too short for the lengthy data collection process.

Survey forms were designed to link and compare the information provided from the volunteer and his/her associated VSA, VIO, beneficiary, and local authorities, where applicable. The volunteer surveys appeared to be too long or too in-depth for some participants. As the analysis plan was not communicated to the participants, some of them did not see the relevance of each question. Thus, they were left blank or not answered in great depth. The survey forms were tested with a few volunteers. However, it was difficult to incorporate all recommendations since they varied from one another.

The plan was to include one to two cases for each MDG and demonstrate a linkage between the opinions of the volunteer, VSA, VIO, beneficiary, and local authorities with regards to the volunteer's contributions. This was not feasible due to the limitations of the data collected. Most cases only had two parties filling out the survey form and some contributions were indirectly related to specific MDGs. However, the responses were all positive about the volunteers' contributions.

It is noteworthy that surveys were also designed and sent out to organizations that do not traditionally involve volunteers to see why they don't participate in volunteer programmes. There was no response from such organizations. It was also difficult to get information from the organizations that involved volunteers. A more effective approach would be to have researchers available to actively follow-up in person on the responses of the intended participants. Therefore an in-country approach would yield more and better quality data.

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8. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Detailed Information from Case Studies

Case 1 – Participatory Planning Support Specialist

Volunteer

MDG 1 – Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

The eradication of poverty occurred through the project's targeting of poorer communities in relation to participatory development (planning and decision-making), which lead to greater social mobilization at the community level. Social mobilization through decentralised funding activities (such as micro credit schemes and loans) contributed to the empowerment of people. The linkages between social mobilization and micro credit schemes or funds allowed people to become not only socially but also economically active through seed capital or funds for developing small business. Enhancing the capacity of the community facilitators and commune development boards assisted in the more effective implementation of local activities and integrated rural development projects at the local level.

MDG 3 – Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Participatory development and specifically targeting women helped to empower women, providing opportunities for increased income generation, in turn giving rise to greater opportunities.

MDG 7 – Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Participants in the participatory development activities were made aware of the importance of environment sustainability and were introduced to ideas and concepts that could improve environmental sustainability.

MDG 8 – Develop a Global Partnership for Development

The volunteer conducted orientation workshops for project officials and high school teachers at the provincial level. Participants were made aware of global issues that affected their lives. The volunteer's work facilitated coordination among donor-funded projects and building relationships with other development agencies.

Volunteer Involving Organization

The VIO and the volunteer benefited from the experience in a number of ways. The volunteer was able to transfer useful skills and experiences to local counterparts. The cost of the volunteer to the VIO was minimal and less than the cost of an external consultant with similar experience. In addition, the volunteer was supported by the VSA, meaning the administration of the volunteer was less demanding for the VIO. The volunteer contributed by motivating local people to participate in preparing developmental plans for their communes and villages as well as by participating in decision making related to the decentralization process in their areas. New concepts and approaches were introduced to the community members enhancing their ability to participate in decision-making processes.

Beneficiary

No data available.

Volunteer Sending Organization

The VSA indicated that the volunteer contributed to three MDGs. By focusing on community mobilization for poverty reduction the volunteer contributed to MDG 1. They contributed to MDG 2 by assisting poor communities to set their own priorities such as building schools and MDG 3 by providing assistance to micro-credit projects for women.

Case 2 – Project Coordinator

Volunteer

MDG 1 – Eradicate Poverty and Extreme Hunger

Children from the poorest sections of the community ('street kids' and the most vulnerable in rural areas) were given access to education and training. In addition to increased confidence and self-esteem such opportunities will grant the children a greater chance of finding employment and playing a more active role in the economy. Increased incomes may enable them to afford medical attention.

MDG 2 – Achieve Universal Primary Education

Street children and children from rural poor families were encouraged to go to school and received support from the organization to continue in school. Families were encouraged to keep their children in school despite their economic hardships and the pressure to have them earning an income. This was done through awareness raising and financial support from the organization.

Volunteer Involving Organization

No data available.

Beneficiary

No data available.

Volunteer Sending Organization

No data available.

Case 3 – Food Safety Specialist

Volunteer's Contribution toward Achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Volunteer

MDG 4 – Reduce Child Mortality

If the government's capacity to monitor, control and provide advice and assistance to the community increases then there will be an improvement in sanitary conditions and food safety. The volunteer provided training to the staff at the National Institute of Nutrition, which is responsible for ensuring food safety.

MDG 6 - Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases

Diarrhoeal diseases, associated with unsafe water and food have been a leading cause of death. Proper food safety control is an important tool in food safety management. In Viet Nam, the national food safety laboratory network is responsible for this task. The volunteer was involved in the development of analytical capability and quality systems of the national food safety network. The volunteer was also involved in the coordination of other food

safety activities financed by WHO and implemented by the Food Administration and national food safety laboratory network.

Volunteer Involving Organization

The volunteer provided assistance and training to the staff at the VIO. Thus, the VIO in this case was also the beneficiary. The information they provided is summarized below.

Beneficiary

The volunteer's approach and professionalism allowed for skills and experience to be transferred to local counterparts. The VIO also perceived the volunteer's contribution as positive and significant in the pursuit of their organizational objectives. The volunteer supported the VIO in analytical work for food safety control and management in compliance with international standards and good clinical practice. The volunteer also contributed significantly to the preparation of investigational protocol of food safety and the development of the analytical laboratory. Training was provided to counterparts at provincial and central levels

Volunteer Sending Organization

The VSA indicated that the volunteer contributed to MDGs 4 and 6. Improving food safety will help reduce child malnutrition and mortality and improve public health in general; thereby reducing vulnerability to diseases.

Case 4 – Drug and Crime Project Coordinator

Volunteer

MDG 1 – Eradicate Poverty and Extreme Hunger

The programme implemented micro-credit schemes and household loans in the community and targeted former drug users. The main drug users in rural communities tend to be male. This has a negative economic impact where the traditional head of the household is not actively engaged in economic activity and is a financial burden on the family. The programme provides financial assistance to former drug users granting affected families access to economic opportunities.

MDG 3 – Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Since most of the drug users are men there is a disproportionate or inequitable distribution of labour and financial responsibility. Rehabilitating male drug users allows them to contribute to their own family's economic and social welfare and so reducing the burden on the women in the family. The project also employed women to act as peer workers and counselors within their communities.

MDG 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

The major achievement was the successful implementation of a project creating appropriate materials and creating the necessary activities and "spaces" for HIV risk reduction among marginalized populations and in remote and rural areas of the country. The programme also developed and disseminated appropriate education, awareness and learning materials. This included the implementation of needle and syringe exchanges, the development of peer outreach networks and the initiation of community-based drug use treatment programmes. This has contributed to the reduction in drug use and hence the risk of the spread of HIV/AIDS. The project also created the necessary activities and 'spaces' for HIV risk reduction among marginalized populations and in the remote and rural areas of the country.

Volunteer Involving Organization

No data available.

Beneficiary

No data available.

Volunteer Sending Organization

No data available.

Case 5 – Environment Conservation Specialist

Volunteer

MDG 7 – Ensure Environmental Sustainability

The project involved improving awareness of environmental and conservation issues in the local community and assisted in conserving the environment. Ensuring local people are considered in the decision-making process allows them to perceive themselves as partners in the process and empowers them to make environmentally sustainable choices. Transferring conservation techniques and knowledge to local communities allows them to consider the impact on the environment of their agricultural practices and economic activity.

Volunteer Involving Organization

No data available.

Beneficiary

No data available.

Volunteer Sending Organization

No data available.

Case 6 – Physical Therapist

Volunteer

MDG 3 – Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Training of Physical Therapists, where at least half were female, assisted in empowering women, improving their education status and so their work opportunities. As a female physical therapist, the volunteer can provide a role model to Vietnamese women who can and do function as equals with men within the medical profession. The VSA was instrumental in getting a female physical therapist the opportunity to travel to the USA for an advanced degree, with the hope that she can advance into a leadership position within the rehabilitation section of the Ministry of Health upon her return to Viet Nam.

MDG 4 – Reduce Child Mortality

Improving rehabilitation services can reduce child mortality. For example, a disabled child with swallowing impairments can aspirate food if the family is not taught to feed them correctly. Similarly, a disabled child left to linger in bed instead of facilitated to move and function to the best of their ability can suffer bed sores, blood clots, pneumonia, increasing the risk of pre-mature death. Improving rehabilitation knowledge amongst professionals leads to improved rehabilitation services.

MDG 5 – Improve Maternal Health

Improving rehabilitation services for disabled women increases the likelihood of such women surviving childbirth.

MDG 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Improving rehabilitation services does not necessarily affect the sources of the diseases directly, but it certainly ameliorates the sequelae of diseases that can in turn lead to early death. Further, poor rehabilitation of the disabled leaves them in a weakened state and at further risk of diseases.

Volunteer Involving Organization

No data available.

Beneficiary

No data available.

Volunteer Sending Organization

No data available.

Case 7 – Combined English and French Teachers Case

Volunteers

MDG 2 – Achieve Universal Primary Education

As an English teacher at a teacher training college the volunteer provided a higher academic level of English. This in turn improved the standard of the teachers. The presence of volunteers could raise the standards of organizations with new ideas and approaches. It could also motivate, enthuse counterparts, encourage people, and motivate them to find out more by going to school and learning a foreign language. Improving teaching standards and teachers' motivations could improve the quality of teaching in the classroom. This is turn may improve student retention rates.

MDG 3 – Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Improving the teaching capacity of university teachers, of which around 50% were women, would empower and expand career choices for women. The volunteer also encouraged female students and young female colleagues to be confident in themselves. Gender awareness was also incorporated into lessons, promoting gender equity in the classrooms. Conducting lessons on gender roles and the role of women in Western society exposed Vietnamese women to ideas and issues that they would not normally be exposed to.

MDG 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Doctors who learnt English and French were able to read scientific and academic articles. This enabled an increase in medical knowledge. Furthermore their development of skills in foreign languages enabled them to read the labels on the drugs that they were administering.

MDG 7 – Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Making teachers aware of environmental issues is potentially a powerful and effective environmental tool since they will pass this knowledge onto their students. Education and

knowledge of environmental issues was promoted in this forum. Tourism and eco-tourism were also promoted in the faculty of tourism. Discussion and promotion of environmental issues within the faculty and among the students raised interest in such issues. This was not a primary objective of the volunteer placement but it was promoted and encouraged by the volunteers themselves.

MDG 8 – Develop a Global Partnership for Development

A knowledge of English opens up greater opportunities to participate in the wider economy. Breaking down language barriers is the first step towards an understanding of different cultures. Understanding leads to the building of trust and hence the development of partnerships. Most volunteers had to build relationships and trust to become effective in their work. This broke down preconceptions about foreigners and promoted understanding.

Volunteer Involving Organization

In several cases, the VIOs are also the beneficiaries. The volunteers brought new ideas and methods that influenced colleagues and encouraged and motivated students to continue their studies. The volunteers transferred specific skills as well as ideas, concepts and new or innovative ways of looking at things from formal teaching and training through the work place. Volunteers also expressed themselves socially.

Beneficiary

The local students and teachers benefited significantly from native language speakers. Cultural exchanges were also beneficial. The volunteers also enhanced the capabilities of the local people to interact with foreigners.

Volunteer Sending Organization

The classroom focus on equal gender participation, respect between the two sexes, and encouragement of girls' involvement in class activities promoted MDG 3. The presence of volunteers in the communities fostered global understanding and development, contributing to the achievement of MDG 8. Although not directly, some volunteers provided training to future teachers at post secondary education level, which is related to MDG 2.

Appendix B – Methodology

Volunteerism Defined

The UNV Programme identifies two broad categories of voluntary action – managed and unmanaged[32]. Unmanaged volunteering is the spontaneous and sporadic helping that takes place between friend and neighbors or in response to man-made or natural disasters. On the other hand managed volunteering tends to be more organized and regular and takes place through organizations in the non-profit, public and private sectors. Although unmanaged volunteering is an important resource for a community and indeed a nation its impacts and measurement are beyond the scope of this study. By focusing on managed voluntary action the study precludes much of the social and cultural aspects in relation to unmanaged voluntary action. Due to time and resource constraints the focus of the study is on managed voluntary action through various organized groups and international agencies. However, this should be put in the local social and cultural context in Viet Nam

Case Study Selection

The selection of case studies or participants was based on the following criteria:

- The participant is willing to participate and access to the participant for follow-up and further clarification is possible;
- The volunteer's assignment appears to have some relevance to the MDGs (this may not be accurately ascertained in the initial selection based on job title or role in the organization);
- The volunteer's assignment is a current assignment or has occurred in the recent past (from January 2003 to March 2004).

Several active national and international volunteer sending agencies, defined as any organizations or agencies that place volunteers were identified and contacted. A list of volunteers was obtained from the agencies. Screening questions were sent to the volunteers to confirm their availability, the nature of their assignment, and time of their assignment to ensure that the volunteers met the inclusion criteria. First, selected current volunteers from the list were contacted and asked to complete a survey questionnaire documenting their experiences. If the number of current volunteers did not reach the required number after sufficient amount of enrolment time, past volunteers were contacted starting with those who most recently completed their assignment.

The information provided by the volunteers was briefly evaluated. Once a volunteer was identified, contact information of the volunteer's stakeholders (volunteer sending agency, volunteer involving organization, beneficiaries, and local authorities in association with the volunteer) was requested.

The enrolment of volunteers stopped when sufficient information had been obtained from the volunteer and the associated volunteer involving organization or beneficiaries for two cases within the scope of each MDG. Cases with missing information from any of these two most critical stakeholders were not included.

If there were more than two cases for a particular MDG, the two cases that were best documented were selected for evaluation and documentation. Enrolment also stopped if two cases for an MDG could not be found within a reasonable amount of time. It should also be recognized that some participants contributed to a number of MDGs. Therefore

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32 United Nations Volunteers, 2001, "Measuring Volunteering: A Practical Toolkit", UNV, Bonn Germany, page 9.

cross-cutting links were accounted for and analyzed. Enrolment was restarted if, after initial evaluation of the data, the results did not yield a sufficient number of cases.

Data and Information Collection

Data and information was collected from a variety of sources. The volunteer sending agencies were the first contact point for lists of volunteers. The volunteers were then identified and contacted. They then served as the contact point for the volunteer involving organizations and beneficiaries. The organizations were then asked to provide contact information for the local authorities and the volunteers' beneficiaries. Information obtained at each contact point was briefly evaluated to identify the need for follow-up and whether to proceed to the next step. The following outlines the various methods of data collection.

Survey questionnaires were used to collect information from the participants. It was desirable that all stakeholders participated in the study.

Literature Review

A review of the literature, including grey literature, was the first method employed to source information on volunteerism and the beneficiaries of the MDGs.

Survey

To gather the data from the participants, survey questionnaires were designed and developed. The content of the survey depended on the objectives of the study and the types of participants that were approached. The target audience was considered in the survey design and how the data was to be collated and presented. The surveys were first distributed to a few participants to evaluate the quality of the survey. They were then modified to better capture the required information.

Volunteers

Two separate questionnaires were prepared for this population; one for international volunteers and one for national volunteers. The questions were similar for both groups with minor modifications to better reflect the characteristics of each group. The questions were designed in relation to:

- Biographical information (including qualifications, skills, language and cultural awareness, where applicable);
- Motivations;
- Pre-departure preparation;
- Employment conditions (including accommodation, working conditions, legal activities, management, and networking, etc.);
- Evaluation of perceived achievements and contributions;
- Evaluation of the volunteer's contribution in terms of resource allocation, local capacity building, sustainability, and impact of local capacities on the volunteer's contribution, where appropriate.

Volunteer-sending agencies

For the volunteer sending agencies, the questions were designed in relation to:

- Agency information;
- Legal and administrative matters (in-country);
- Recruitment issues;
- Pre-departure and volunteer support issues (including training and supervision);
- Working relationship with the volunteer involving organizations;
- Evaluation of the organization's contribution to the achievement of the MDGs.

An attempt was made to identify the staff most familiar with the volunteer to complete the survey. If they could not be identified other staff at the agency were asked to complete the survey.

Volunteer involving organizations

For the volunteer involving organizations, the questions focused on the following aspects:

- Information on the organization;
- Legal and administrative matters;
- Volunteer support;
- Recognition of the volunteer's contribution;
- Evaluation of the contribution of the volunteer to the organization and its communities toward the achievement of the MDGs;
- Evaluation of the volunteer's contribution in terms of resource allocation.

An attempt was made to identify the staff most familiar with the volunteer to complete the survey. If they could not be identified other staff at the agency were asked to complete the survey.

Beneficiaries

For the beneficiaries, the following questions were provided:
- Community information;
- Type of voluntary action received;
- Evaluation on recognition of the contribution of the volunteer.

An attempt was made to identify a representative of the beneficiaries who was most familiar with the work of the volunteer through the volunteer involving organization.

Local authorities

For the local authorities, the following questions were prepared:

- Type of authority;
- Opinions on volunteerism;
- Recognition of the volunteer's contribution, where applicable;
- Evaluation of the volunteer's contribution in term of resource allocation, local capacity building, sustainability, and impact of local capacities on the volunteer's contribution, where appropriate.

Non-involving volunteer organizations

For the organizations that may not involve volunteers, questions were prepared focusing on the following aspects:

- Information on the organization;
- Reasons for not involving volunteers;
- Future plan for involving volunteers.

Analysis Plan

The focus was on the contribution of the volunteer as recognised by the available stakeholders. A linkage was identified if all available stakeholders were in agreement with their perceptions of the contribution of the volunteer. Following conflicting results the stakeholders who provided the conflicting information were consulted. If a cause for the disagreement was identified, an attempt was made to reconcile the disagreement. A

linkage was not recognized if reconciliation could not be accomplished. The evaluation was the foundation for identifying the linkage between volunteerism and the achievement of the MDGs.

Cases with pertinent related information between the volunteer-volunteer sending agency, volunteer-volunteer involving organization and volunteer sending agency-volunteer involving organization were triangulated to identify opportunities to improve the preparation process, support for the volunteer, working relationship, and networking. This served as a foundation for recommendations for volunteer sending agencies and volunteer involving organizations.

The information obtained from each type of stakeholders was also evaluated separately to gain understanding of their perspectives on the impact of volunteerism on the MDGs. Cross-case comparison was conducted to investigate factors that may enhance or negate the contribution of the volunteer.

The information collected from the local beneficiaries and government authorities was also used to make general observations regarding their perceptions of the contribution of the volunteers to the achievement of the MDGs. The information collected from these stakeholders and the literature review was used to support recommendations to the authorities.

Appendix C – International Volunteer Survey

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

In-country location:	
Volunteer job title:	
Sponsoring organization, if applicable:	
Receiving/involving organization:	

PREPARATION

If you had a job description, was it detailed enough to give you some ideas of what your tasks would be?
How well do you think your assignment was/is well-matched with your skills/experiences? Was this significant?
How well were/are you prepared for this assignment, if applicable? What needs to be improved in this process?
Outline factors that you think may limit the opportunities for somebody like yourself to volunteer.
Outline factors that you think may enhance participation of expatriates in volunteering
How adequately do you think that volunteerism is promoted in Viet Nam?
If you have any suggestion to better promote volunteerism in Viet Nam, please outline them.
How do you rate the support you receive from your placing/sending agency? Please elaborate.
What needs to be improved in this process?

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

Please outline your housing and accommodation arrangements?
Please outline your working conditions and comment on their adequacy to do the job?
Describe the level of support from the employing/involving organization?
Please comment on the adequacy of the resources that you needed/need to complete your tasks? How sufficient/insufficient are they?
What needs to be improved in this aspect?

ACHIEVEMENTS

How realistic do you think the perceptions or expectations of you were/are?
What have been your major achievements in this volunteering experience?
Outline the how you think the achievements/contributions in your volunteer placement relates to the achievements or contribution towards realizing any aspect of the Millennium Development Goals (not matter how small or indirect you may think it may be, we would like to know about it)?
What do you consider to be the main external factors that supported you in making the contributions/achievements listed above?
How was/is your contribution recognized by the organization that you provide/provided services to? What were/are their perceptions of your contribution?
If you had a government organization that sponsored your work, how was/is your contribution recognized by that government sponsoring agency? What was the feedback in relation to your contribution, if applicable?
How was/is your contribution recognized by your sending agency, if applicable? What was the feedback in relation to your contribution, if applicable?
Who were/are the beneficiaries of your work? (e.g. women, youth, general community etc) How was/is your contribution recognized by the beneficiary community that you

provided/provide services to? What was the feedback in relation to your contribution, if applicable?
How was/is your contribution recognized by your sending agency, if applicable? What was the feedback in relation to your contribution, if applicable?
Do you think that your achievements will be sustained once your assignment ends? If so, please elaborate why and outline main factors that may help to sustain it. If not, please elaborate why not and outline factors that may prevent its sustainability. If so, please elaborate why and outline main factors that may help to sustain it.
Overall, do you think it was/is a positive outcome for yourself and the receiving/involving organization and the beneficiaries
What do you think are the main barriers that may prevent you from meeting your goals/objectives?
Would you consider volunteering again?
If it is possible to improve any aspect of your volunteer experience or the contributions that you made, what, in your opinions, would be the best way to do it?

COMMUNICATIONS

If you had/have a Vietnamese counterpart(s), were you able to communicate effectively with him/her? (This can help in the transference of skills and knowledge)
Did/do you have direct contact with your immediate beneficiaries to your work? Please elaborate. If not, what were/are the reasons except language barrier?
Was it possible for you to communicate or receive support from the local authorities when you needed/need to?
Was there any opportunity for you to network or share information with other volunteers? If so, how critical/beneficial was this in your work and contribution to the organization that you were/are working for?
What could be improved in this aspect?

LOCAL CAPACITY ISSUES

In this series of questions we want to determine the extent of what is called 'local capacity'. This reflects the capacity of sub-national government (local, District or Provincial Government as well as communes) and the capacity of local 'civil' society to participate in activities that interact with local government. Civil Society is characterized by organizations based on groupings in the community (Social organizations, NGO's, unions, and local interest groups etc.). Strengthening the relationship and interaction between these groups and the various levels of government (mainly local government bodies) is a key to developing democratic governance. In this we are looking at the capacity of people to organize themselves in a way that allows them to effectively participate (social capacity) and ultimately influence 'decision-makers' (or local authorities) as well as the 'decision-makers' being able to respond to the demands of the people (in terms of resource allocation and planning, budgeting, administration etc).

The types of "capacities" that are considered important relate to:

1. Enhancing capacities of **individuals**, especially farmers and businessmen, the key actors of community development;
2. Enhancing capacities of **local administrative** (executive) bodies, the constitutional institution;
3. Enhancing capacities of **people's elected bodies** - the constitutional institution to ensure oversight function, and of mass organizations such as women union, youth union, union of veterans, etc., which are key to mobilize the people's participation;
4. Enhancing capacities of **civil society and/or community-based groups** such as farmer's association (VACVINA), women saving groups etc. as means of check and balance.

Did your work involve you in developing the capacity of:

1. Sub-national levels of government (that is levels of government 'under' the National government including the capacities related to local administrative bodies and elected bodies) or
2. Local organizations (including community-based groups and individuals)?

1. If you were involved in assisting sub-national levels of government:

What sub-national level (local authority) did/do your work involve (i.e. Commune, District, and Provincial)?
What type of governance work/activities were/are you involved in that related to this particular level of government/local authority?
How did/does your contribution impact on strengthening the agency effectiveness?
How do you describe the capacity of the local authority to carry out its required functions?
In relation to the capacity of this local authority what were/are the impacts on your work/contribution? (For example if capacity was very poor did it have an adverse impact on your ability to make a contribution and how did it do this?)
Which local capacity aspect produced the greatest impact on your work/contribution and how did it do this?
What was/is your contribution (if any) to assisting the development of local capacity in light of the above introduction (in relation to the particular level of government that you were/are involved in)?

2. If you were involved in assisting local organizations or community-based groups:

What type of organization did/do you assist?
How did/does your contribution impact on strengthening the organization effectiveness?
How did/does your contribution impact on strengthening the position of the organization in the society?
How do you describe the capacity of the organization to carry out its required functions?
How did this impact on your ability to make a contribution to this organization?
Describe the nature of the relationship between this organization and the local authorities.
What was your contribution (if any) to assisting the development of local capacity in light of the above introduction (in relation to the particular organization that you were involved in)?

FURTHER COMMENTS

If you have any other relevant comments that may assist us in our research, please elaborate here.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

We plan to do a survey on your receiving/involving organization and the beneficiaries of your work. We greatly appreciate if you could provide us with the contact information for these parties.

Receiving/involving organization contact personnel (who works most closely with you)	Name: Address: Email address: Phone/Fax:
Beneficiary (who has benefited from your work)	Name: Address: Email address: Phone/Fax:

Please indicate whether you will be available for any follow-up if it is needed: **Yes/No**

Appendix D – Volunteer Involving Organization Survey (VIO)

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization name	
In-country location	
Area of specialization, if applicable	
Organization Type (e.g. Government Department, NGO, Aid Donor etc)	

MOTIVATIONS

Why did the organization decide to employ/involve a volunteer?
How active is the organization in employing/involving volunteers? How many volunteers does your organization involve?
In what capacity or role has the organization engaged volunteers in the past?
Does the organization have the type of needs (unmet or new needs) that can be fulfilled by recruiting volunteers?

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

If the volunteer was not provided to the organization by a volunteer-sending agency, please specify how the organization recruited the volunteer and whether it is efficient to recruit volunteer that way.
Describe the restrictions as to how the organization could request and employ/involve a volunteer?
Please describe the level of support from the relevant authorities in relation to employing/involving a volunteer? Please specify the type of authorities you are referring to.
What would you like to suggest to the relevant authorities to increase their support to volunteerism? Please specify the type of authorities you are referring to.
Was there any need for extra administrative processes or any increases in costs to administer the volunteer placement? If yes, please be specific. Were the increased costs justified in your opinion? If no, please elaborate.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

How adequate is the level of resources the volunteer receives from the organization to undertake the work they are supposed to do?
Did the organization receive adequate information about the volunteer from the volunteer sending agency? If not, please elaborate
Was the organization able to receive support from the volunteer-sending agency if/when it was needed? If not, please elaborate.
Who initiated the volunteer's assignment or placement (i.e. the organization, the volunteer sending agency, or the volunteer)?
What are the areas or ways that you would like the volunteer-sending agency to support the organization to enhance the contribution of the volunteer? If yes, please elaborate.

VOLUNTEER EVALUATION

What were the volunteer's major achievements?   Please relate the volunteer's contributions/achievements to the achievement of any aspect of any of the Millennium Development Goals.
How was the volunteer's contributions recognized within the organization? Please elaborate.
What does the organization think of the volunteer's contributions to the organization or community?
Were the local authorities aware of the volunteer's achievements/contributions? If so, what were their perceptions of these contributions?

Who were the beneficiaries of the work performed by the volunteer (please specify – e.g. women, youth, children, co-workers etc)
How did they benefit from the volunteer's work or contributions?

Were the beneficiaries aware of the volunteer's contributions/achievements? If so, how did they see it benefited them?

Does the organization think that the contribution of the volunteer will be sustained after he/she has left/leaves the organization or community?
If so, please elaborate why and outline main factors that may help it to sustain.
If no, please elaborate why not and outline factors that may prevent sustainability.

What do you think are the main factors that may help to enhance the contribution of the volunteer to the organization or community?

What do you think are the main factors that may prevent the volunteer to maximize his/her contributions to the organization or community?

Would the organization consider engaging a volunteer for a similar role again?

How does the organization think that the impact of the contributions of the volunteer could have been improved?

LOCAL CAPACITY ISSUES

How did the contribution of the volunteer extend to local capacity-building? (*This could be in the form of building capacity of local government authorities or local community or other similar organizations. Examples of capacity-building may include systems or processes that enhance operations of the local government or other local organizations (such as improved accounting processes, improved planning systems, improved administrative functions, increasing awareness of citizens of government operations and functions etc). It may also involve targeting the poor, meeting their needs and making assessment on the impacts of the plans/projects on the lives of the poor (i.e. proper planning and resource allocation), involving the poor in making the plans and decisions that affect their lives, organizing the implementation of poverty reduction projects, grassroots democracy decrees, revised budget law, etc*).

AGENCY GOALS AND PRIORITIES

What are goals and strategic objectives of your organization?
How does the utilization of volunteers contribute to your organization's strategic directions or objectives?
Describe the nature of the organization's relationship with the local authorities or Central Government. How does this impact on your organization?

FURTHER COMMENTS

If you have any other relevant comments that may assist us in our research, please elaborate here.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

We plan to do a survey on the community or the beneficiaries of the contribution of the volunteer. We also plan to conduct a survey of the local government authorities as well. We greatly appreciate if you could provide us with the contact information for these parties.

Local authority personnel who can provide us some information on his/her opinions on volunteerism	Name: Address: Email address: Phone/Fax:
Beneficiary (who has benefited from the volunteer's contribution. It could be a local community leader, doctor, village elder, etc.)	Name: Address: Email address: Phone/Fax:

Please indicate whether you will be available for any follow-up if it is needed: **Yes/No**

Appendix D – Volunteer Non-Involving Organization Survey

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization Name	
Organization Type	
Country of origin of Organization	
Area of specialization, if applicable	

Did you previously involve volunteers in your organization?
If so, how do you rate that experience?
Please give reasons why your organization does not currently involve volunteers from international volunteer-sending agencies.
Please give reasons why your organization does not currently involve volunteers from local sources.
In your view, what contribution may volunteers bring to your organization?
What are some of the limitations of involving volunteers?
How do you think some of these limitations can be overcome?
Would you consider utilizing the skills of a volunteer in the future? In what capacity?
What is your view about the role of volunteerism in development?

AGENCY GOALS AND PRIORITIES

What are goals and strategic objectives of your organization?
How does the utilization of volunteers contribute to your organization's strategic directions or objectives?
Describe the nature of the organization's relationship with the local authorities or Central Government. How does this impact on your organization?

LOCAL CAPACITY ISSUES

We are interested in local capacity issues and how volunteerism impacts on these issues and how they in turn impact on the effectiveness of volunteerism. (*This could be in the form of building capacity of local government authorities or local community or other similar organizations. Examples of capacity-building may include systems or processes that enhance operations of the local government or other local organizations (such as improved accounting processes, improved planning systems, improved administrative functions, increasing awareness of citizens of government operations and functions etc). It may also involve targeting the poor, meeting their needs and making assessment on the impacts of the plans/projects on the lives of the poor (i.e. proper planning and resource allocation), involving the poor in making the plans and decisions that affect their lives, organizing the implementation of poverty reduction projects, grassroots democracy decrees, revised budget law, etc*).

Please comment on how you view local capacity and how it may impact on volunteerism and how volunteerism may assist in building local capacity.

Appendix E – Beneficiary Survey

| Community type: |
| Locality: |

| Were/are you aware of the volunteer that was working with your community/organization? (if the volunteer was part of a group then you can answer the questions in relation to the group) How did you know about his/her work? By what source? (i.e, they were working with you or by directly talking to them or having someone introduced them to you, etc) |
| What was the nature of the volunteer's work? |
| How did the volunteer contribute to you, your community, or organization? |
| What were the benefits of having a volunteer working with your community or organization? |
| How do you think the volunteer could have contributed more? |
| Do you think that there was any misunderstanding or miscommunication between you and the volunteer? Please describe them if any. If so how can they be addressed or rectified? |
| What are your opinions on the impacts of volunteerism on the development of your community? |
| What are the factors that might have affected how much your community could assist the volunteer? |
| If you have any other relevant comments that may assist us in our research, please elaborate here. |

Appendix F – National Volunteer Survey

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

In-country location	
Volunteer job title	
Sponsoring organization, if applicable.	
Receiving/involving organization	

PREPARATION

If you had a job description, was it detailed enough to give you some ideas of what your tasks would be?
How well do you think your assignment was/is well-matched with your skills/experiences? Was this significant?
How well were/are you prepared for this assignment?   What needs to be improved in this process?
Outline factors that you think may limit the opportunities for somebody like yourself to volunteer.
Outline factors that you think may enhance participation of Vietnamese in volunteering
How adequately do you think that volunteerism is promoted in Viet Nam?
If you have any suggestion to better promote volunteerism in Viet Nam, please outline them.
How do you rate the support you receive from your placing/sending agency, if applicable?
What needs to be improved in this process?

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

Please outline your working conditions and comment on their adequacy to do the job?
Describe the level of support from the employing/involving organization?
Please comment on the adequacy of the resources that you needed/need to complete your tasks?   How sufficient/insufficient are they?
What needs to be improved in this aspect?

ACHIEVEMENTS

How realistic do you think the perceptions or expectations of you were/are?
What have been your major achievements in this volunteering experience?   Outline the how you think the achievements/contributions in your volunteer placement relates to the achievements or contribution towards realizing any aspect of the Millennium Development Goals (not matter how small or indirect you may think it may be, we would like to know about it)?
What do you consider to be the main external factors that supported you in making the contributions/achievements listed above?
How was/is your contribution recognized by the organization that you provide/provided services to?   What was the feedback in relation to your contribution, if applicable?
If you had a government organization that sponsored you, how was/is your contribution recognized by that government sponsoring agency?   What was the feedback in relation to your contribution, if applicable?
How was/is your contribution recognized by your sending agency, if applicable?   What was the feedback in relation to your contribution, if applicable?
Who were/are the beneficiaries of your work? (e.g. women, youth, general community etc)   How was/is your contribution recognized by the beneficiary community that you provided/provide services to?   What was the feedback in relation to your contribution, if applicable?

Do you think that your achievements will be sustained once your assignment ends? If so, please elaborate why and outline main factors that may help to sustain it. If not, please elaborate why not and outline factors that may prevent it.
Overall, do you think it was/is a positive outcome for yourself and the receiving/involving organization and the beneficiaries?
What do you think are the main barriers that may prevent you from meeting your goals/objectives?
Would you consider volunteering again?
If it is possible to improve any aspect of your volunteer experience or the contributions that you made, what, in your opinions, would be the best way to do it?

COMMUNICATIONS

If you had/have a counterpart(s), were you able to communicate effectively with him/her? (This can help in the transference of skills and knowledge)
Did/do you have direct contact with your immediate beneficiaries to your work? Please elaborate. If not, what were/are the reasons?
Was it possible for you to communicate or receive support from the local authorities when you needed/need to?
Was there any opportunity for you to network or share information with other volunteers? If so, how critical/beneficial was this in your work and contribution to the organization that you were/are working for?
What could be improved in this aspect?

LOCAL CAPACITY ISSUES

In this series of questions we want to determine the extent of what is called 'local capacity'. This reflects the capacity of sub-national government (local, District or Provincial Government as well as communes) and the capacity of local 'civil' society to participate in activities that interact with local government. Civil Society is characterized by organizations based on groupings in the community (NGO's, unions, growers groups and local interest groups etc.). Strengthening the relationship and interaction between these groups and the various levels of government (mainly local government bodies) is a key to developing democratic governance. In this we are looking at the capacity of people to organize themselves in a way that allows them to effectively participate (social capacity) and ultimately influence 'decision-makers' (or local authorities) as well as the 'decision-makers' being able to respond to the demands of the people (in terms of resource allocation and planning, budgeting, administration etc).

The types of "capacities" that are considered important relate to:

5. Enhancing capacities of **individuals**, especially farmers and businessmen, the key actors of community development;
6. Enhancing capacities of **local administrative** (executive) bodies, the constitutional institution;
7. Enhancing capacities of **people's elected bodies** - the constitutional institution to ensure oversight function, and of mass organizations such as women union, youth union, union of veterans, etc., which are key to mobilize the people's participation;
8. Enhancing capacities of **civil society and/or community-based groups** such as farmer's association (VACVINA), women saving groups etc. as means of check and balance.

Did your work involve you in developing the capacity of:

3. Sub-national levels of government (that is levels of government 'under' the National government including the capacities related to local administrative bodies and elected bodies) or
4. Local organizations (including community-based groups and individuals)?

1. If you were involved in assisting sub-national levels of government:

What sub-national level (local authority) did/do your work involve (i.e. Commune, District, and Provincial)?
What type of governance work/activities were/are you involved in that related to this particular level of government/local authority?
How did/does your contribution impact on strengthening the agency effectiveness?
How do you describe the capacity of the local authority to carry out its required functions?
In relation to the capacity of this local authority what were/are the impacts on your work/contribution? (For example if capacity was very poor did it have an adverse impact on your ability to make a contribution and how did it do this?)
Which local capacity aspect produced the greatest impact on your work/contribution and how did it do this?
What was/is your contribution (if any) to assisting the development of local capacity in light of the above introduction (in relation to the particular level of government that you were/are involved in)?

2. If you were involved in assisting local organizations:

What type of organization did/do you assist?
How did/does your contribution impact on strengthening the organization effectiveness?
How did/does your contribution impact on strengthening the position of the organization in the society?
How do you describe the capacity of the organization to carry out its required functions?
How did this impact on your ability to make a contribution to this organization?
Describe the nature of the relationship between this organization and the local authorities.
What was your contribution (if any) to assisting the development of local capacity in light of the above introduction (in relation to the particular organization that you were involved in)?

FURTHER COMMENTS

If you have any other relevant comments that may assist us in our research, please elaborate here.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

We plan to do a survey on your receiving/involving organization and the beneficiaries of your work. We greatly appreciate if you could provide us with the contact information for these parties.

Receiving/involving organization contact personnel (who works most closely with you)	Name: Address: Email address: Phone/Fax:
Beneficiary (who has benefited from your work)	Name: Address: Email address: Phone/Fax:

Please indicate whether you will be available for any follow-up if it is needed: **Yes/No**

Appendix G – Local Authority Survey

Job title:
Type of authority:
Locality:

Were/are you aware of the volunteer's activities or work that she/he was undertaking within your local government area? (if the volunteer was part of a group then you can answer the questions in relation to the group) How were the volunteer's activities made known to you or your agency? What was/is the nature of the volunteer's work?
What was the level of communication between your agency and the volunteer? Please describe the nature of the relationship. Was there any time that you and the volunteer misunderstood each other or failed to cooperate? If there was, please elaborate the situation and the reasons.
In your opinion what were the results or achievements of the volunteer? Please be specific.
In what way did/does the volunteer assist the local government authority?
How do you perceive the volunteer's contribution to you and/or your community? That is, was it beneficial, could it have been improved, for example?
Do you think that there were any disadvantages of having a volunteer working with you, the local government authority or your community? If so, how can they be addressed or rectified?
Would you like to see other volunteers working with your organization (local government) or your community in the future?
What are your opinions on the impacts of volunteerism on the development of your community or local government?
What are the factors that might have affected how much the local government could have assisted the volunteer?
If you have any other relevant comments that may assist us in our research, please elaborate here.