ABOUT FORUM

The International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum) is the most significant global network of International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations (IVCO).

Forum aims to:

- share information
- research key contemporary issues
- develop good practice; and
- enhance cooperation and support among its members

Forum holds an annual conference, IVCO, for members to meet, share and learn from each other. Throughout the year, support is also provided via the website, Executive Coordinator and Board of Directors. Members continue to find the Forum network an invaluable resource and would like Forum to continue the opportunities for learning and exchange, especially through research, conferences and workshops.

Forum is a “virtual” global organisation. We have grown our global membership to include associate members encompassing a range of organisations involved in international development, whether through their direct services, related research and/or support of or interest in working with such organisations.

Forum is resourced by membership subscriptions, the staff time and budgets of the organisations providing the Chair and Board of Directors, staff time contributed to the annual IVCO conference, Forum’s working groups and other projects, as well as occasional grants.
FORUM’S PURPOSE

VISION

A movement of global citizens working for a world where no-one is left behind.

Mission

Forum is a global network of organisations involved in international volunteering. Forum promotes the value of volunteering for development through policy engagement, mutual learning and by sharing innovative and good practices.

Values

The Forum Charter outlines the principles, values and ethical behaviour underpinning international volunteering for development.

Charter

All members joining the network agree to and sign the Forum Charter. By doing so, members affirm their commitment to a set of principles, values and ethical behaviour underpinning international volunteering cooperation.

The Forum Charter recognises that:

- International volunteering is a uniquely innovative and effective avenue for the creation of constructive relationships between nations, communities, individuals and across cultures.
- International volunteering, when based on respectful, open human to human relationships and mutual exchange, can be a catalyst for practical achievement in tackling shared development challenges. Thus, contributing in practical ways to the creation of a fairer, more caring and socially just world.
- The opportunity to engage in international volunteering and cooperative work is a privilege. The openness and hospitality of host communities should always be acknowledged and valued as it is a core foundation for such exchange to occur.

Please refer to Forum’s Charter for a more detailed description of Forum’s values:

http://forum-ids.org/about/vision-mission-charter/
FORUM’S KEY ACHIEVEMENTS
FOR 2013-2015

Forum has made significant progress in all four of its strategic objectives for 2013-2015: promotion, knowledge sharing, membership and organisational capacity development.

Promotion
Forum increased the visibility and recognition of the value of volunteering for development at a global level. Coordinated by Forum, the Post-2015/Volunteer Groups Alliance successfully positioned ‘Volunteer Groups’ as a key stakeholder to the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and obtained recognition by the UN Secretary-General of the important contribution of volunteerism to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With this substantial achievement, Forum is well positioned to continue to play this leadership role in the Volunteer Groups Alliance and to continue to encourage this recognition at global and national levels for the implementation of the SDGs.

Knowledge sharing
Since 2013, Forum has also been working to increase the effectiveness of sharing, learning and networking among members, and the annual International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations (IVCO) conference, convened by Forum and a hosting member, is a major knowledge sharing activity. The last three IVCOs have opened up Forum’s reach to francophone countries, Latin America and the Caribbean. The growing number of participants at these events has demonstrated the value of this activity for Forum members, their partners and other volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs), and has been confirmed by IVCO evaluations and the 2015 strategic planning survey.

Research has continued to be a focus for Forum and a research strategy was endorsed by members in 2015. This area of work is of strategic importance to Forum and members, particularly in the area of volunteer impact measurement. With the strategy, Forum’s credible body of research and good practice is expected to increase in its breadth and depth in the coming years and collaborative partnerships will be developed to enhance this area of work. In parallel, the website has been continually improved and an e-newsletter introduced to promote this larger body of evidence and knowledge developed by Forum, members, IVCO participants and others.
Membership
In 2013-2015, Forum’s membership expansion and diversification targets were met. Forum now has 33 members and associate members from 19 countries across the five world regions. Forum’s identity continues to be shaped by its emerging alliances and by the evolving linkages between international and national volunteering. This is reflected in the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.

Organisational capacity
Forum continues to grow its organisational capacity. Forum’s organisational pillars include a volunteer Board of Directors, three voluntary working groups and a part-time Executive Coordinator hosted by Australian Volunteers International (AVI) in Melbourne, supported by a part-time Accountant and a part-time Website and Communications contractor. Since 2013, Forum has become an incorporated entity in Canada, established Post-2015 representation in New York hosted by the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV), and introduced a Canadian Secretariat hosted by World University Service of Canada (WUSC) in Ottawa. In addition to membership fees, significant contributions by members to both the Research fund and the Post-2015 fund have enabled the scaling-up of Forum’s activities and capacities during this period and laid a solid foundation for Forum’s strengthened capacity into 2016-2020.
FORUM’S STRATEGY FOR 2016-2020

To promote a diverse, effective and influential global community of volunteer organisations and initiatives in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Success indicators

- Recognised Forum leadership in Volunteer Groups Alliance for the SDGs.
- Strong influence of the international and national volunteering groups in the setting of the SDGs’ policies and plans.
- Sustainable support from governments and donors to international and national volunteering for development.
- Improved volunteering for development practices aligned with the SDGs.
- Enhanced contribution of international and national volunteers to the SDGs.
- Credible measurement, better documentation and greater recognition of the impact of volunteerism.
PROMOTING EFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE GENERATION AND SHARING AMONGST MEMBERS

Key initiatives

- Contribute to global measurement efforts.
- Contribute to the Global Research Agenda on Volunteering for Sustainable Development1.
- Produce Forum discussion papers and commission research.
- Host an annual IVCO conference
  - Produce related discussion papers
  - Commission related research on topics of interest to members to inform good practice.

Forum will look to the Plan of Action 2016-20302 for ways in which we can contribute to and complement this work.

Strategic issues and opportunities

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<tr>
<th>Strategic issues</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aligning international volunteering for development (IV4D) knowledge development with the SDGs</td>
<td>Setting of the SDGs and national plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening the evidence base for the effective contribution of volunteers to the SDGs</td>
<td>Global Research Agenda and emerging partnerships for volunteer impact measurement methods Donors’ interest in measuring results and value for money</td>
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<td>Fostering cost-effective volunteering systems, inclusive partnerships and innovative sustainable development models to improve IV4D effectiveness and inclusiveness</td>
<td>Forum members’ systems, standards and best practices</td>
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1 The Global Research Agenda on Volunteering for Sustainable Development is an initiative of Forum members: Center for Social Development (CSD), United Nations Volunteer programme (UNV) and Forum.

Main outcomes

- Demonstrated leadership by Forum in effective knowledge generation regarding the specific contribution of volunteerism to development.
- Creation of a collective framework, relevant to Forum members, to strengthen the evidence base demonstrating volunteerism’s impact and contribution to the SDGs.
- Enhanced body of IV4D systems, standards, innovations and good practices for sharing among members, partners, alliances and other volunteer-involving groups.
- Five IVCOs (one for each world region) with themes relevant to the SDGs, IV4D trends and Forum’s agenda.
INCREASING VISIBILITY AND RECOGNITION OF THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERISM IN DEVELOPMENT

Key initiatives

- Engage at the global level on the SDGs in ways that reinforce national efforts
  - Influence the global agenda through representation in New York
- Promote outcomes of knowledge generation efforts in various fora.
- Maintain and develop Forum’s website as a go-to site.

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<td>Promoting the value of volunteering for development in Post-2015 development policies at the global level and implementation plans of the SDGs at the national level</td>
<td>UN’s recognition of the contribution of volunteerism to the SDGs</td>
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| Building inclusive alliances to influence the agenda at the global and national level to consolidate the recognition and value of volunteering for development | Forum’s representation in New York and engagement of Post-2015/Volunteer Groups Alliance members with:   
  - civil society actors and networks  
  - UN system  
  - private sector  
  - other relevant stakeholders |
| Aligning research and communication strategies for evidence-based advocacy re volunteers’ contributions to the SDGs | Measure and report impact of volunteers’ contributions to the SDGs             |

Main outcomes

- Enhanced alliance of volunteer-involving groups with Forum’s coordination and support.
- Sustained campaign by Forum and the Post-2015/Volunteer Groups Alliance to consolidate the recognition and value of volunteering for development in the SDGs’ plans.
- Increased evidence of volunteers’ impact on sustainable development reflected clearly in SDGs communications by governments and development institutions.
BUILDING A VIBRANT AND INCLUSIVE CONSTITUENCY IN SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING AND VOLUNTEERING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Key initiatives

- Create recognised branding of Forum as the global voice for international volunteering and volunteering for development movement.
- Expand membership and alliances in all five world regions interlinked with Forum’s knowledge generation and visibility agendas supporting international volunteering and volunteering for development strategies.
- Strengthen Forum's activities and resources alongside the growing engagement of members.

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<td>Balancing international volunteering and volunteering for development in Forum’s identity</td>
<td>Members’ agreement with Forum’s mission</td>
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<td>Increasing the participation and support of all members and partners in Forum's activities</td>
<td>Positive context for international volunteering and volunteering for development</td>
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<td>Balancing regional representation</td>
<td>Membership of emerging volunteer-involving organisations in the Global South</td>
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<td>Targeted membership of IVCOs from middle income countries</td>
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<td>Participation of emerging volunteer-involving organisations at IVCOs (in regions where conferences are held)</td>
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Main outcomes

- Recognised branding of Forum as the global voice for international volunteering and volunteering for development movement.
- Membership and alliance expansion in all five world regions interlinked with Forum’s knowledge generation and visibility strategic objectives.
- Strengthened and focused Forum activities and resources alongside the growing engagement of members.
STRENGTHENING AND FOCUSING THE CAPACITY OF FORUM

Key initiatives

- Develop Forum's capability and capacity to secure funding, build on the Forum Charter to establish guiding principles, and strengthen partnerships and engagement with other sectors working to achieve the SDGs.
- Focus Forum’s capacity on the priority areas identified in the Strategic Plan.

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<td>Resourcing Forum’s ambitions for 2016-2020</td>
<td>Positive global context for international volunteering for development Members’ and donors’ interest in demonstrating results Emerging alliances with other volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) Call for members’ special contributions, especially in-kind and staff contributions</td>
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<td>Focusing and aligning Forum’s agenda for cost-effective, meaningful and sustainable impact</td>
<td>SDGs</td>
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<td>Leveraging the engagement and expertise of members to strengthen Forum and enhancing the engagement and work of active members</td>
<td>Members’ commitment to Forum</td>
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Main outcomes

- Annual action plans with resourcing priorities.
- Aligned strategies for research, IVCOs, communication, advocacy and networking.
- Multi-year donor funding for research, effective knowledge development and capacity building.
- In-kind and cash contributions from partners in the alliance for the Post-2015 work.
- Increased in-kind and cash contributions from members and IVCOs to meet Forum’s core needs.
- Adequate organisational capacity to deliver Forum’s 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.