



IVCO
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COVID-19 AND

VOLUNTEERING

FOR DEVELOPMENT

IMPACTS, INNOVATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

HELENE PEROLD, JACOB MWATHI MATI, CLIFF ALLUM, BENJAMIN J. LOUGH



The authors and Forum are very proud to launch this important paper at IVCO 2020. It draws on findings from Forum's research project on COVID-19 and the Future of Volunteering for Development. The final report of this project will be published in January 2021.

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Helene Perold,

Helene Perold and Associates, South Africa

Dr. Cliff Allum,

Third Sector Research Centre, Department of Social Policy, University of Birmingham, UK

Dr. Benjamin Lough,

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA

Dr. Jacob Mwathi Mati,

Sol Plaatje University, South Africa



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The worldwide COVID-19 disruption caught volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) off guard. Despite the experience VIOs had previously gained in the face of natural disasters, mass violence, and infectious disease outbreaks, COVID-19 confronted organisations with a new and frightening reality on a global scale not previously experienced.

This paper presents some preliminary findings from a study commissioned by the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum) to examine how the disruption of international volunteering is impacting on the work of international volunteer cooperation organisations (IVCOs), other VIOs, partners and the communities they serve.

The study was conducted with seven IVCOs [Australian Volunteers International (AVI), Cuso International, France Volontaires, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Norec, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and Unité] using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. In the six countries where six of these IVCOs operate, researchers conducted interviews with country directors/representatives and held virtual focus groups with partner organisations and volunteers in Fiji (AVI), Peru (Cuso International), the Philippines (France Volontaires), South Africa (JICA), Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda (Norec), and Nigeria (VSO). Researchers also administered two surveys - one to volunteers serving with each of the seven IVCOs during the pandemic and one to the members of four international volunteer service networks (IVSNs): Forum, the International Association for Volunteering Effort (IAVE), the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS), and the Volunteer Groups Alliance (VGA).¹

The paper shares initial findings around three aspects of the COVID-19 experience: What happened to volunteers in the COVID-19 pandemic? What programme innovations and adaptations signal new growth areas in a post-COVID-19 context? And what does the future hold for volunteering for development (V4D)?

What Happened to Volunteers in the Covid-19 Pandemic?

Findings from this research demonstrated that the COVID-19 pandemic had an immediate and disruptive impact on volunteer organisations, VIO programmes and the volunteers themselves. When national governments imposed severe restrictions on mobility through mandatory lockdown measures, volunteers were restricted in their activities unless they used internet platforms and social media; but even these methods made it impossible for the organisations facilitating these volunteer engagements to continue operating effectively. Programme operations slowed down, their engagements with communities were disrupted, and when international volunteers were repatriated, local staff were overwhelmed by the sudden demands and could not always fill the gaps left by their absence, particularly in respect of technical support.

In Peru for example, Cuso International (hereafter Cuso) was no longer able to provide technical support to indigenous communities working on gender-based violence, nor urban partners supporting food production. Cuso then recruited Canadians who had chosen to stay in Peru to provide additional support but, as with everyone else, these volunteers had to work from home. The Tennis Fiji programme, supported by AVI volunteers to address gender imbalances in the sport, came to a dead stop and the Australian volunteer was repatriated. From home she has continued supporting the organisation remotely but commented that “working remotely ... is significantly less satisfying than being in the location where the things are happening”.² Another repatriated Australian volunteer who had spent many years in Fiji commented, “In Fiji, if you’re not there, you’re not there. Working remotely is very difficult. We’re trying to keep the project alive..”.³ In Nigeria, VSO’s inclusive education programme for hearing-impaired children stopped when the schools were closed but has been able to continue in a limited form by distributing solar-powered radios and printed materials in communities.

Despite lockdown regulations being eased, national COVID-related guidelines and protocols have continued to impact programme operations. In Uganda the Youth Exchange South to South (YESS) programme needs to get permission from the district authority to move from one area to another to conduct their pared-down activities.⁴ In Fiji, the principal of a school for disabled children described how, “If a child with epilepsy falls down, you cannot just leave the child. Though social distancing was there, we were following precautionary measures that we could.”⁵ Likewise, partner organisations in Peru have struggled to (re)connect with their communities, “because the indigenous people are protecting themselves from the anybody [sic] arriving from the urban cities”.⁶ As one international volunteer remarked about his/her partner organisation, “They are struggling to grapple with adjusting to new restrictions with the pandemic.”

Many programmes have had to switch their activities to providing COVID-related support, such as hygiene awareness campaigns and distributing food parcels provided by government where needed. In Peru volunteer activism is evident. As one VIO participant remarked, “when these organizations learn that some of the communities are not obtaining the bonus or the food baskets that are deliver (sic) nationally, they denounce it and they make it public”.

The impact of COVID-19 on VIO programmes has revealed the complexity of the volunteer landscape within countries and demonstrated how different types of volunteers are playing various roles in response to the difficult conditions.

The research demonstrated that community-based volunteers can bridge the gap between partner organisations and communities – both during lockdown and in the provision of essential services after restrictions are eased. By living within the communities, these volunteers have been able to earn the trust of people who were very suspicious of their government’s intentions with regard to managing the COVID-19 outbreak. Such trust has produced greater community receptiveness to hygiene and other awareness campaigns.

The community-based volunteers are also important conduits for communication about food shortages and reporting cases in which financial support promised by government to alleviate joblessness has not been received. When asked whether volunteering might be threatened by COVID-19, a VSO volunteer in Nigeria indicated that this is unlikely in the case of community-based volunteers who do not move from one area to another. However, another participant in the VSO Nigeria focus group suggested that the lack of resources to pay allowances to community-based volunteers could threaten programmatic volunteering.⁷

The research also found that community-based and national volunteers are providing support, solidarity and hope through messaging in local languages and using indigenous networks to find creative ways of reaching out to programme recipients. Uganda’s YESS coordinator pointed to the indispensable role of community-based and national volunteers, as well as South to South exchange participants, in supporting communities with hope during the pandemic:

... volunteering is one of the mysteries for people, because they find that with the pandemic, everybody else had really given up. But we as volunteers are there to give hope to the people in their communities, we are there to educate people about different things that are about issues that affect them in their lives.⁸

Nevertheless, the impact of COVID-19 on movement and convening may threaten the quality and reach of volunteer-based programmes longer term, as one of the YESS focus group participants pointed out:

.. the girls in remote areas are now left out ... It's hard to reach them. So now, we even couldn't follow up on the ones that we have recruited to our program. ... I'm sure now those girls don't remember anything. And if they do, it's very little, which is not our target.

There is evidence that international volunteers continue to make important contributions to host countries within COVID-19, either having chosen to stay onsite, or by continuing to work with partners via remote volunteering following repatriation. This is outlined further below.



Australian volunteer Emma Hand (left) works as a Farm Management Trainer with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Animal Production and Health Department in Samoa, 2016. Photographer: Darren James

Impact on International Volunteers

At the time of the research, all six participating IVCOs indicated that interest in onsite international volunteering remains high despite the COVID-related travel bans, health risks and government instructions to repatriate their citizen volunteers. In some cases, repatriated volunteers are anxious to return to their host countries and, as in the case of JICA, are on 'stand-by' to complete their contracts in-country. Others who have been recruited but cannot travel because of border closures and other restrictions, continue to hope their placements will materialise. In many cases repatriated volunteers are traumatised by the sudden dislocation from their placements, some particularly so because they were only just starting to see the fruits of their involvement after the first six months.

The volunteer and partner organisations involved in five country focus groups were forthright about the psychosocial impact of COVID-19. The coordinator of the Uganda YESS programme described how South to South exchange participants were “worried about going home ... worried about their parents... worried about contracting the virus. So somehow it created tension among them”.⁹

Repatriation took centre stage as governments acted to safeguard their citizens serving abroad, but the two surveys carried out indicate that this exercise produced varied results. When the international volunteers (n=201) were asked if they had been repatriated, 47% reported they had been repatriated, and 53% said they had not. This indicates that in-person international volunteering did not cease because of COVID-19.¹⁰

One area that arose for volunteers, though not for VIOs, was the issue of agency – that many volunteers were not offered an actual or meaningful choice but had to return to their home countries. Of those repatriated, 44% stated they had no choice in this decision, although this was not always a clear-cut issue.

VIOs indicated that if the volunteers chose to stay in-country, the consequences would be severe. For example, some IVCOs clarified that volunteers would be breaking their contract, lose their medical insurance, visas, work permits and allowances. However, research findings indicate variations in how different IVCOs approached these policies, even within their own programmes. For instance, there was some suggestion that South-South volunteering programmes may have been more likely to retain volunteers in place than North-South programmes.

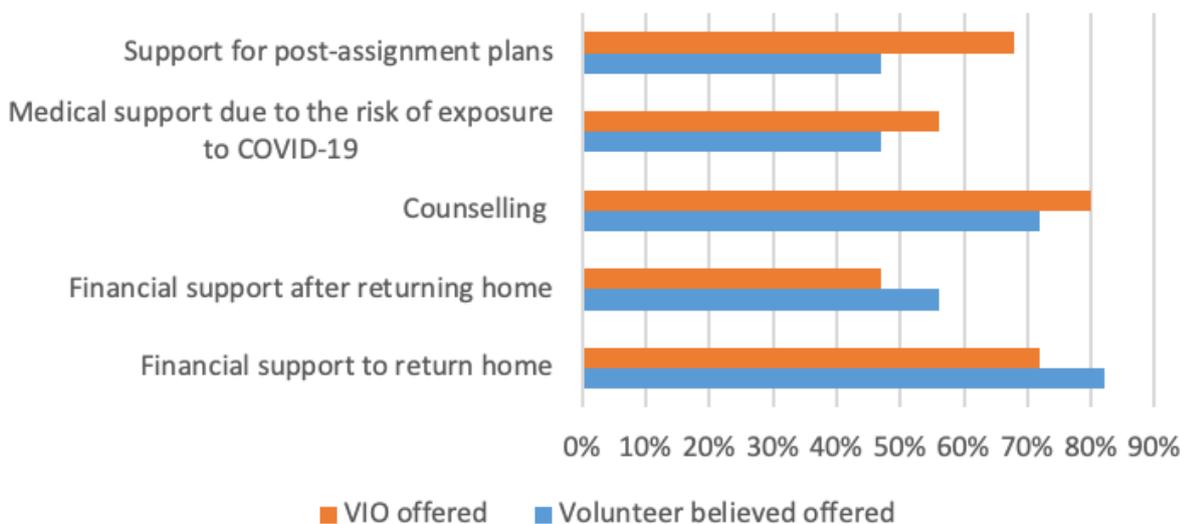
*Those who wanted to stay were allowed to do so if the host place could guarantee to take care for their safety; volunteers and parents had to sign. They would have been taken possible risks into account.*¹¹

Focus group participants were generally approving of the support offered by their respective IVCOs. These included repatriation costs, a post-repatriation allowance for some months and psychological services where needed. The IVCO and volunteer surveys indicated similar findings, except for some discrepancies between the perceptions of the VIOs and their volunteers.

For example, when asked what their IVCO had offered to them, over 80% of the volunteer respondents stated they had been offered financial support to return home; 55% reported that their organisation offered financial support for a period afterwards. 72% thought counselling support was available. A minority of volunteers said support for post-assignment plans (47%) and ongoing medical support (47%) was available.

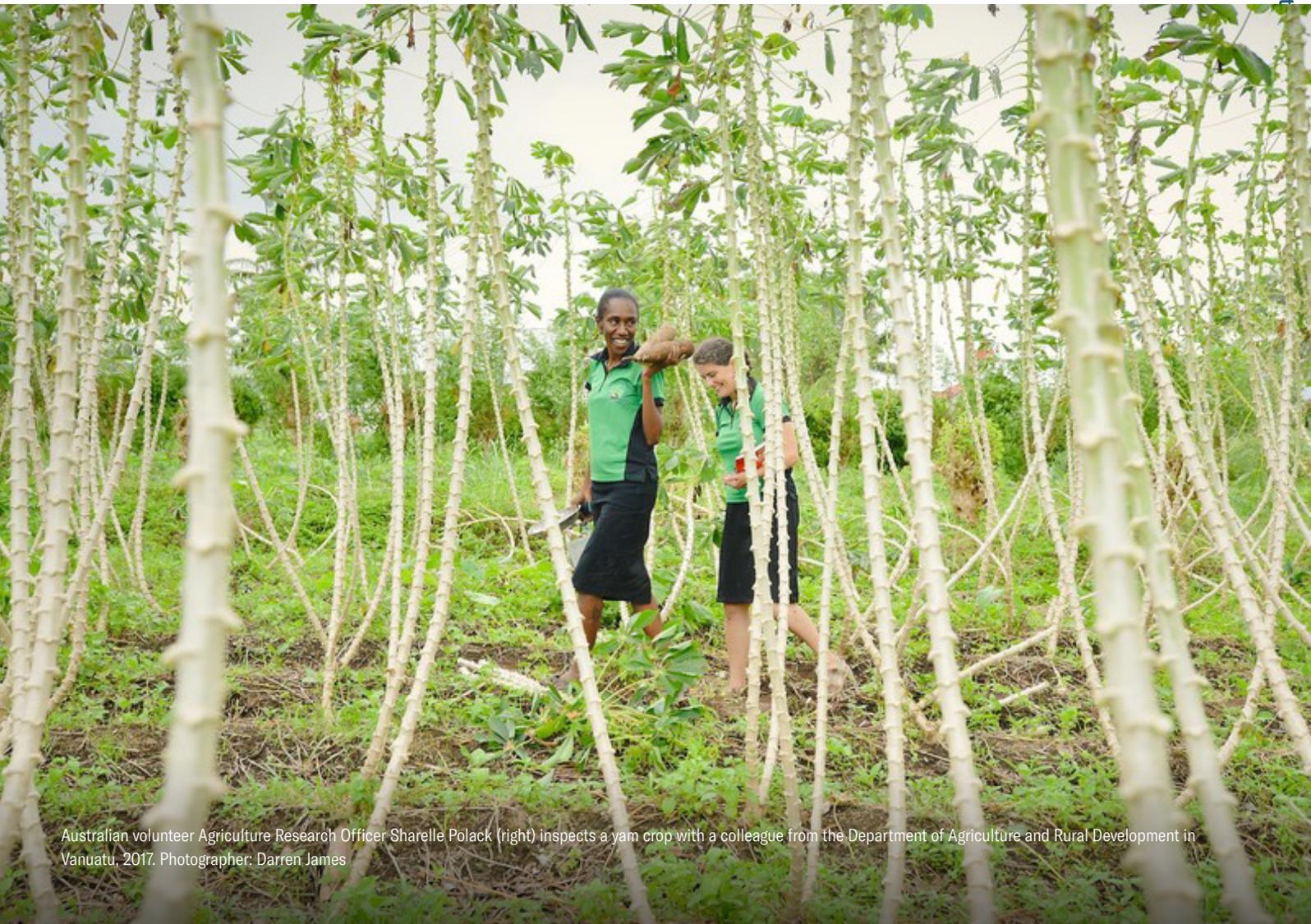
However, a comparison between what the volunteer respondents required, and what the organisation respondents thought they required, shows a discrepancy of perceptions about counselling and support on post- assignment plans as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Comparing volunteer and VIO views on volunteer support offered



Innovations, Adaptations and New Growth Areas in a Post-Covid-19 Context

While COVID-19 has greatly disrupted the ‘traditional’ volunteering context, the study findings point to several adaptations and innovations in VIO activities and methods, some immediate and others borrowed from strategies previously employed. Key among these is the use of technology. Examples of adaptations point to a combination of quick shifts in focus, especially towards interventions on COVID-19-related issues such as providing personal safety information/sensitisation and the development of advocacy materials. This means that volunteers remained relevant in the communities of their placement, and it clearly offsets any view that in-person international volunteering ceased because of COVID-19. As illustrated below, evidence suggests that IVCOs and VIOs can build on emergent adaptations and innovations, not only to remain relevant, but also to continue delivering development services.



Australian volunteer Agriculture Research Officer Sharelle Polack (right) inspects a yam crop with a colleague from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Vanuatu, 2017. Photographer: Darren James

The Use of Technology and Media

Interviews with representatives of VIOs, volunteers and experts reveal an almost immediate embrace of remote volunteering through the use of the internet and cellular services such as WhatsApp to reach beneficiary/primary actor communities, as well as for volunteers and organisations to continue their work. This is corroborated by survey data which indicated that an overwhelming 80% of volunteers were offered an opportunity for continued remote online support for their partner organisation. The view of volunteers on the opportunity of remote volunteering aligns with the VIO survey, which has a remarkably similar score at 79%.

Through internet and cellular-mediated delivery of services and advocacy, Movimiento Manuela Ramos, a Cuso partner in Peru, initiated psychosocial support for victims of gender-based violence, while Movimiento Ciudadano Frente al Cambio Climático continues its environmental and climate justice advocacy campaigns online. These included use of online concerts for advocacy and to lift people's spirits in a time of despair.¹² Through the use of online support, Movimiento Manuela Ramos has even been able to extend counselling to women elsewhere in the region. The organisation has adjusted well to delivering counselling online and has managed to coordinate these activities more closely with the state and other partners.

In Nigeria, Peru, Ghana, Philippines, Uganda, Rwanda and Fiji, WhatsApp and Zoom or equivalent digital communication platforms are now being widely used for mobilisation, dissemination of public information and meetings. Within Norec, the YESS programme is using WhatsApp to keep project staff, exchange participants and their parents in constant communication, which helps to ease anxiety. In the words of the Rwanda YESS coordinator, this is the first time that this level of parental involvement has been witnessed in monitoring the wellbeing of their children who are volunteering in a different country.¹³

Adaptations have also meant going back to older, tested methods and strategies, such as the development and printing of posters (Nigeria), use of radio broadcasts for public education purposes (Nigeria, Rwanda, and Peru) as well as using speakers mounted on garbage trucks to deliver public health and other messages to communities, using local languages (Peru). Specific examples include VSO Nigeria developing and printing sign language posters for purposes of public health education.

With regards to radio, VSO Nigeria is working with partners and national volunteers to continue delivering education and public health programmes using solar powered radios. In Rwanda, Norec partner Rwanda Girl Guides Association initiated partnerships with radio and TV stations to deliver menstrual hygiene education to young girls. This required repurposing the content of a training manual for use in radio and TV programmes that helped YESS volunteers “learn new approaches to keep impacting the world by doing online [internet-based] activities, but also with media houses.”¹⁴

Our findings further suggest, as Jamison (1978) observed, that the development goals being promoted and the special characteristics of projects determine whether these strategies will be effective and transferable.¹⁵ For example, task-oriented activities are likely to be more successful in remote volunteering than capacity building activities.¹⁶

Technology-aided remote volunteering also calls for reimagining volunteerism's traditional reciprocity between volunteers and their hosts, as these 'new ways' do not always guarantee the development of such relationships. IVCOs are already grappling with these new realities. JICA for example, is considering a possible model whereby the programme might include reciprocal online volunteering with Japanese volunteers supporting communities in the traditional host countries while these host communities identify national volunteers who could collaborate with Japanese volunteers in delivering developmental objectives (technical or cross-cultural learning) in both countries.¹⁷ There are opportunities for cross-IVCO learning here. For example, Norec's South-South and South-North exchange programmes and VSO's international volunteering model might offer useful lessons for JICA to adapt to their needs.



Investments in Infrastructure Will Be Necessary

There are questions, though, with regard to the reach and efficacy of technology-mediated remote volunteering. Specifically, in addition to host communities being underserved by internet infrastructure, households in these communities are also from low income brackets. This means that internet-mediated volunteering is likely to exacerbate existing marginalisation unless VIOs and other partners invest in ensuring that no one is left behind. Success of technology-mediated strategies will therefore be dependent, as has been the case so far, on partnerships to deliver development outcomes.

This reality is recognised by both IVCOs and their partners. In the Philippines, for example, the value of partnership is illustrated by Eau et Vie, a partner of France Volontaires. Through partnerships with other non-profits and social enterprises, community-based volunteers, local leaders, local government authorities, associations of homeowners, local and multinational companies were able to continue providing piped water for free (they had hitherto been charging) in poor underserved communities most hard hit by job layoffs.¹⁸ Such partnerships ensure that the Eau et Vie revenue shortages are plugged through local fundraising especially from the corporate sector. As a result, none of the employees or volunteers of the Eau et Vie have been laid off. This contrasts sharply with Peru and Nigeria where it was revealed that community-based volunteers in certain projects are no longer receiving their allowances because their activities had been halted.

While some of these partnerships predate the COVID-19 era, others were triggered by the pandemic. A case in point is the partnership between Eau et Vie and Make Sense in the Philippines. At the start of this pandemic, Make Sense mobilised volunteers who continue helping Eau et Vie to raise funds “to help us communicate on social media, marketing design and mobilising hygiene kits for distribution in the communities.”¹⁹ In the same country, another France Volontaires partner, Passerelles Numeriques, a vocational training institute, has been able to continue offering limited online training and support to their beneficiaries through partnerships with local companies and universities. However, questions have been raised on the value proposition of some of the existing partnerships due to the ‘democratising’ nature of online learning and training.²⁰ There is need to consider these issues even as IVCOs and VIOs ponder over re-imagining and re-inventing partnerships.

The Future Is Consortia?

The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have forced the need for greater collaboration even in places where this has not always been possible. In Mexico, for example, a concert was produced by the foundation of the main television station with the help of several other big foundations. In the words of one of the experts interviewed, this is an interesting development that signifies a movement towards institutionalisation of working together, a phenomenon not observed before:

We are learning to work together for the greater good ... That has been a lot more evident during this pandemic.... I've been in this business for a long time, and I have not observed that kind of alliances being created...The other thing is the generosity of foundations and individuals has been more evident.²¹

In Nigeria a new partnership between the Climate and Sustainable Development Network and Unilever has resulted in donations and the distribution of personal hygiene products such as soaps in the communities. These cases illustrate the agility of VIOs to adapt and respond to emerging COVID-19-related challenges and opportunities. In the view of the VSO Nigeria Country Director, “working in consortia is going to become one of the most powerful tools going forward.”²²

Relatedly, instances of repurposing funding by IVCOs and their VIO partners were reported in all countries. This has helped meet immediate needs of volunteers and partners. In Fiji and Nigeria, for example, AVI and VSO respectively have given grants to their partners to help cushion them or to enable them to respond to new COVID-19-related challenges and opportunities in the communities. In Rwanda, Norec has allowed the local partner to repurpose unutilised resources towards, for example, paying allowances and housing for volunteers. Such flexibility has not always been evident prior to COVID-19.²³

These examples point to opportunities for IVCOs to partner with various initiatives in receiving countries. They include nascent volunteering support infrastructure organisations and corporate organisations, especially through their social responsibility initiatives. Further, VIOs could lobby, advocate for and explore partnerships with internet service providers to ensure enhanced reach in poor, underserved communities. Essentially, this is a call to re-imagine the roles and strategies that VIOs, and especially IVCOs, utilise in delivering development outcomes.

What Does the Future Hold?

The COVID-19 pandemic contains elements that impact on some of the central aspects of the way in which V4D is undertaken by VIOs and especially those working internationally. Such impacts may be transitory, or they may have lasting effects with the potential of accelerating existing trends in the way V4D operates or setting V4D on a new course.

The decline in available international travel opportunities, restrictions on internal travel, and closure of country borders, mean that the provision of international volunteer opportunities faces significant barriers. With a potential loss of appetite from major funding sources, essentially governmental funds in the global North, and possible reduced interest from volunteers themselves, the provision of international volunteers appears problematic.

COVID-19 also has the potential to affect national and community-based volunteers. The willingness on the part of VIOs to maintain programmes is a critical factor. This research has shown how the COVID-19 experience resulted in some instances in a review of the kind of programmes provided and how this impacted on the role of community-based volunteers. But while community-based volunteers may be part of the community where they are living, this is not necessarily the same for national volunteers.

In the survey undertaken as part of this research, VIOs were asked for their views on what had changed in their organisation due to COVID-19. It is interesting to note that VIOs identified organisational structure as a key area of change, while volunteering models are an area where change is not seen as taking place. There is also some suggestion of programme focus being reviewed:

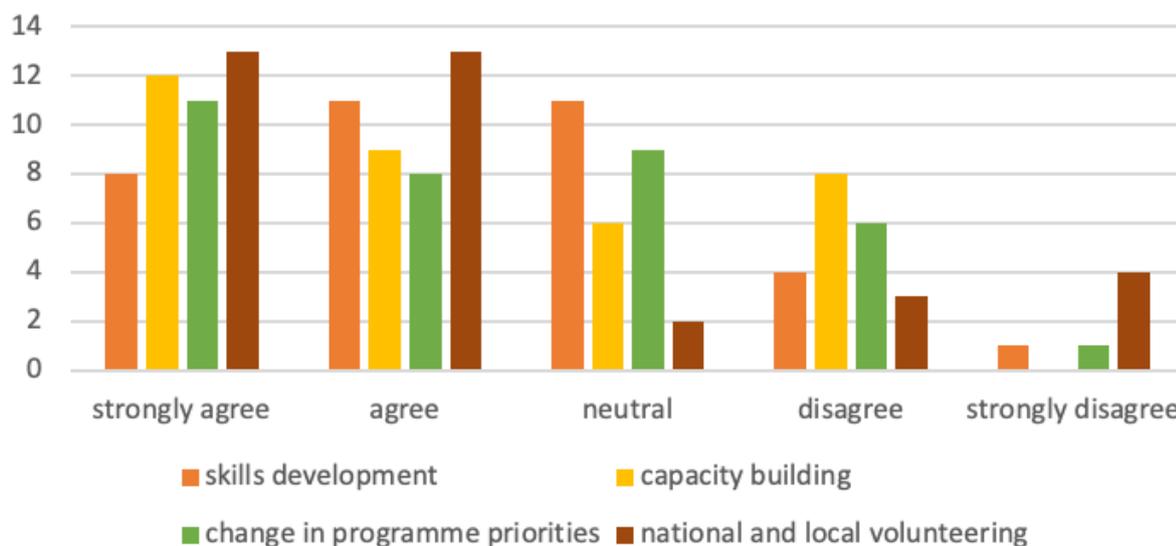
Although some new ways of working are put in place, there is also a strong fear for change. Some things which in the past would take ages to change, now suddenly changed quickly, for others there is still strong resistance.

COVID-19 has seen VIOs make organisational changes and related operational changes as a direct consequence of the pandemic, e.g. office closures, but also to effect desired changes for which the pandemic provides the opportune moment. But these are short-term changes, and some may be reversed in due course as the 'new normal' emerges.

Looking to the longer term, how is the experience of the pandemic likely to shape V4D in the future? The research sought the views of both VIOs and volunteers on possible areas of change: a heightened focus on skills development, a heightened focus on capacity building, a change in programme priorities where volunteers are assigned, and a heightened focus on national and community-based volunteering.

As illustrated in Figure 2 below, the area of greatest expected change is the expansion of national and community-based volunteers in future activity. At the same time, the focus of the work as capacity building presents more strongly than skills development, while changes in programme focus are also strongly indicated. **What seems clear is that overall, VIOs are expecting and projecting changes in how V4D operates.**²⁴

Figure 2: VIO views of the heightened activity of V4D in the future



These expectations were generally reinforced by the views expressed in the volunteer survey, with one exception – **that around 20% of volunteers did not agree there would be an increased use of online volunteers.**

Arguably, what we are seeing here is a sense of the value of V4D in its current form; that those involved, while looking at innovations, are still attached to the traditional face-to-face model and look towards a return to pre-COVID-19 practice at some point in the future.

I believe COVID-19 is not here to stay. After a while it will be gone and things will go back to normal again. Therefore, we should just find a New Normal on Volunteering amidst the pandemic, which afterwards will be forgotten when the international exchange programmes will resume. So, for now, volunteering should also focus on capacity building and skills development. Skills development and capacity building should be done also through online exchanges. (volunteer)

This possibly accounts for the views about online volunteering. On the one hand, many IVCOs have seen this as an immediate alternative to maintain activity in the current situation. However, it is less clear about the long-term place of online volunteering in the

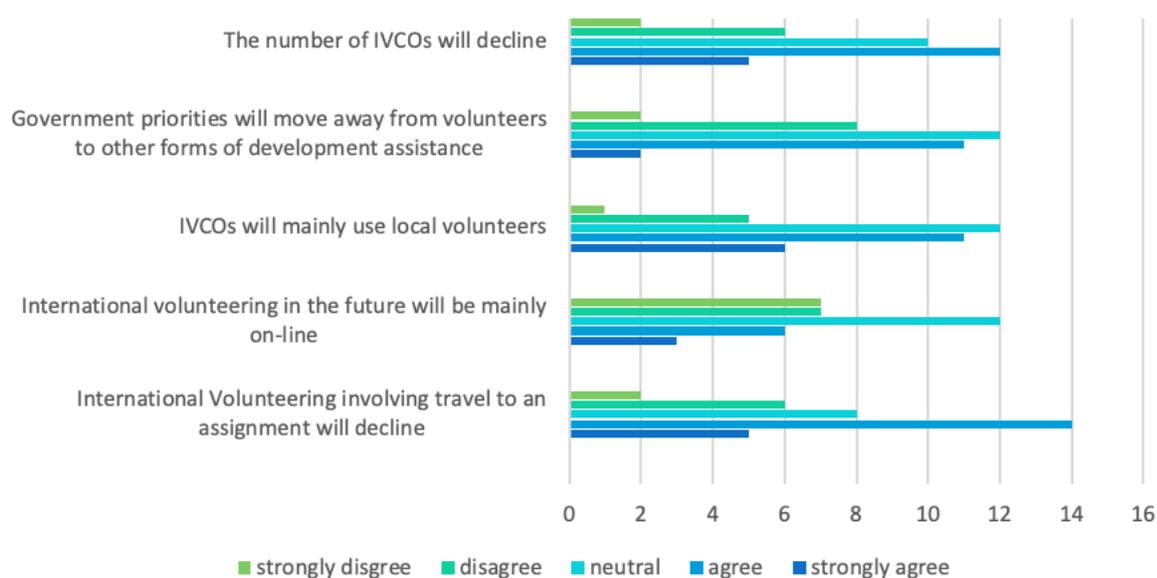
V4D world. In responding to the ways on which people communicate virtually – including the use of social media and virtual meetings and exchanges – it presents as part of the new ways of working as society changes. However, it can also be seen as formalising existing practice of the ways in which (some) volunteers continue to connect with organisations and communities in their past assignments. Our fieldwork has indicated that volunteers are still wanted in person by local partners and communities.

I think online support is great, but for the work I did you need to be on the field 90% of the time, so no online support programme would come even close to that level of support. Also, there is not proper internet coverage everywhere and definitely no financial means for national volunteers to afford that! (volunteer)²⁵

The volunteer survey indicated a strong level of commitment by volunteers to continue to volunteer both face-to-face and across national borders. It also indicated a high level of optimism over the future of V4D.

All told, there is a strong expectation of change and yet a general valuing of face-to-face volunteering. When VIOs were asked to consider the long-term future of different kinds of IVCO activity, as shown in Figure 3, there was a lack of strongly held views. However, there is an indication that the respondents anticipated a decline in the number of IVCOs, increased use of local volunteers, and a decline in international volunteers travelling to assignments. Views on online volunteering were balanced or unformed.

Figure 3: VIOs views on the future of IVCOs



Such views may not be easily consistent. **But taken together, there is sense that traditional ‘in person’ international volunteering will decline as will the number of IVCOs. But this will be replaced by local volunteers and perhaps transnational South-South volunteering rather than online volunteers.**

Concluding Comments

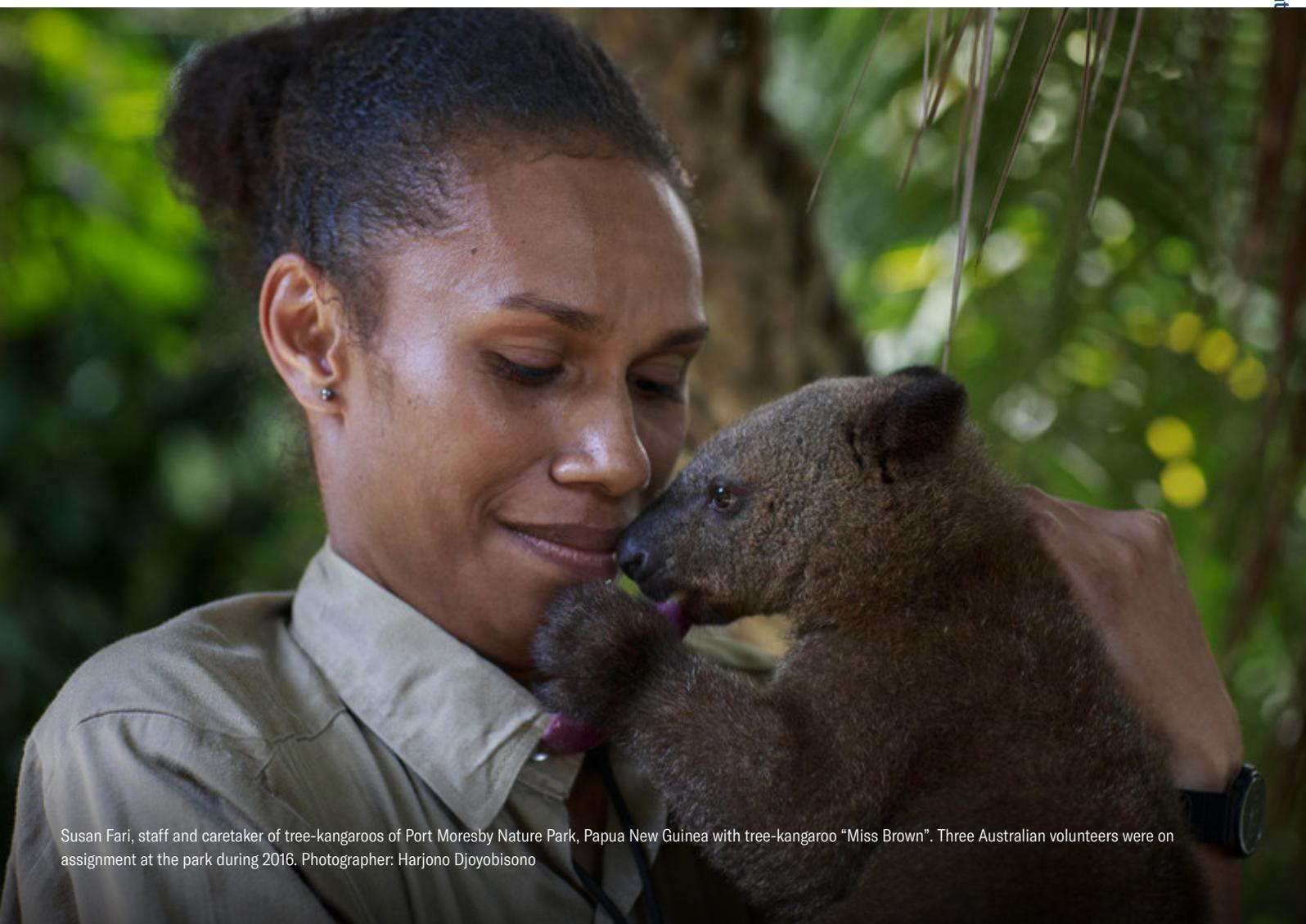
This paper represents an interim report on a research study that is still in progress. Nevertheless, the findings already show how VIOs, volunteers, partners and communities were faced with an immediate challenge that dramatically affected all involved. These stakeholders addressed changes to their environments and circumstances in different ways. The policy of repatriating international volunteers (and/or their non-replacement) had significant implications for VIOs, partner organisations, and communities. The adaptation to retain the connection of international volunteers through online support of partners is widespread; however, it is not generally viewed as a substitute for the physical presence of volunteers. As we have shown above, most of the volunteers who were surveyed did not leave their assignment, but the forced repatriation of many international volunteers left an immediate vacuum in communities. This gap continues, while IVCOs try to identify when and how their international programmes can be restarted.

Research findings indicate that VIOs, community-based volunteers and partner organisations have all needed to experiment with new ways of working. Their innovative approaches and experimentations may craft new roles for international volunteers. There is little doubt that VIOs and volunteers are expecting wide-ranging changes to their programmes in the years ahead.

At this stage, the study has little to say about the contemporary role of donors. Other scholarship has connected international volunteering to the 'soft power' objectives of nation states.²⁶ Our study also indicates that international volunteering is central to the citizen diplomacy objectives of some governments. Resolving this contradiction between the safety of citizens and national ambitions for volunteers to engage internationally may prove critical in determining the size and shape of the international volunteering sector of the future.

Key Questions for IVCOs

- What is the long-term potential and limitations for online volunteering? Can it operate without “leaving no-one behind”?
- What models of international volunteering are most likely to emerge as a result of COVID-19?
- Do multi-stakeholder consortia offer an effective way forward for VIOs beyond COVID-19?
- How might IVCOs support or enhance the growth of national and community-based volunteering in the Global South?



Susan Fari, staff and caretaker of tree-kangaroos of Port Moresby Nature Park, Papua New Guinea with tree-kangaroo “Miss Brown”. Three Australian volunteers were on assignment at the park during 2016. Photographer: Harjono Djoyobisono

Endnotes

- 1** The IVCOs participating in both fieldwork and the surveys were each asked to invite 100 volunteers serving at the time of the pandemic, to participate in the volunteer survey, which had a response rate of 30%. The survey is now closed. Although Unité was not part of the fieldwork study, responses from their volunteers were included in the interim survey report.
- 2** AVI volunteer focus group 18/09/2020.
- 3** AVI volunteer focus group 18/09/2020.
- 4** The Youth Empowerment South to South (YESS) programme is part of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) movement active across 15 countries worldwide and funded by Norec. Focus group held on 22 September 2020.
- 5** AVI Fiji partner organisation focus group 16/09/20
- 6** Cuso International Peru Country Director, interview 26/0820
- 7** “if there is no available resources ... this is the area where the whole situation is affecting volunteerism”. . [VSO Nigeria focus group, 26/08/20).
- 8** Norec partner interview, 22/09/2020.
- 9** The Ghana Girl Guides coordinator described the impact on staff and participants: there was so much tension, you know, we were all disturbed, but we tried our best to keep them ... stable, assuring them that even though we are all struggling with this pandemic, we should know that it is something that is now with us ... live with it now and try and come out of it.
- 10** The VIO survey involved 39 participating organisations (including the seven IVCOs involved in the fieldwork research), whereas the volunteer survey was restricted to the seven IVCOs. The results are not strictly comparable.
- 11** Forum 2020 Survey of IVCOs and other VIOs
- 12** Online music concerts were also mentioned as having been held in Mexico to thank COVID-19 front-line workers (Butcher, expert interview 28/09/2020) and in the Philippines for fundraising by Eau et Vie and partners (France Volontaires partner interview, 15/09/2020).
- 13** Norec partner interview 22/09/20.
- 14** Norec NPO Section Director interview 22/9/2020.
- 15** Jamison D. T. (1978). Radio for formal education and for development communication. Development communication report, (24), 1–2

- 16** AVI volunteer focus group, 18/09/2020; France Volontaires Country Director in the Philippines and the AVI Regional Director - Central and North Pacific, interview 23/09/2020.
- 17** Interview with the JICA Secretariat of JOCV 06/10/2020.
- 18** France Volontaires partner interview 15/09/2020.
- 19** France Volontaires partner, Life Project for Youth, interview 15/09/2020
- 20** France Volontaires partner focus group 15/09/2020.
- 21** Butche, interview 28/09/2020.
- 22** VSO Nigeria Country Director interview, 22/09/2020.
- 23** Idea extracted from Norec NPO Section Director interview, 22/9/2020. It should be recognised that while the fieldwork indicated this level of change, the surveys did not necessarily show the same outcomes. Partner support and resourcing emerge as some of the ‘can do better areas’ for IVCOs in the volunteers survey.
- 24** I see more blended placements in our future: remote volunteers partnered with community/national volunteers to deliver capacity building support; partners having access to a combination of volunteer and funding support in one ‘package’; more short-term, targeted placements than we had before as volunteers are nervous about making long-term commitments overseas and/or are not financially stable enough to commit to long term placements (VIO survey respondent).
- 25** Another volunteer stated: Whilst I am in support of remote volunteering, I think that it takes away from the personal / human interactions and may thwart the effectiveness of true capacity strengthening. I think where one has had a good deal of prior in person involvement with a PO makes for more successful outcomes.
- 26** Rieffel, L., & Zalud, S. (2006). “International Volunteering: smart power” (Issue June). The Brookings Institution. <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/policybriefs/pb155.htm>. See also Lough, B. J., & Fee, A. (forthcoming). Breaking the iron cage: Understanding legitimacy claims for international development volunteering.