

**HANDBOOKS FOR ORGANISATIONS THAT  
WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS IN DEVELOPMENT**

# Glossary



# Forum's Global Volunteering Standard

## How to use the handbooks:

The Global Volunteering Standard is a voluntary standard that seeks to promote continuous learning and improvement for volunteer-involving organisations. It is the result of a collaborative global effort over three years drawing upon the expertise and wisdom of several hundred people and organisations from 80 countries across the volunteering in development sector and beyond. To make use of the handbooks based on the Standard, you should first familiarise yourself with the standard and the specific areas it covers. Each set of handbooks provide guidance on topics that reflect the four different areas of the standard, namely, **Designing and Delivering Projects**, **Duty of Care**, **Managing Volunteers**, and **Measuring Impact**.

The information in these handbooks have been developed to help you evaluate and improve your volunteer program and to ensure that it aligns with the Standard and meets the needs of your volunteers and organisation. Each set of handbooks should be read together to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. It is important to read the handbooks thoroughly and consider how the ideas and recommendations apply to your organisation's volunteer program.

### Here are some general tips on how to read your handbooks as a set:

- **Start with the introduction:** Each handbook should have an introduction that provides an overview of the handbook's purpose and scope. Start by reading these introductions to get a sense of how each handbook fits into the set.
- **Look for common themes:** As you read each handbook, look for common themes and ideas. Pay attention to how these themes are developed and presented across the set. This will help you develop a comprehensive understanding of the overall area.
- **Cross-reference:** Cross-reference the handbooks as you read. This will help you make connections between different sections and ideas and reinforce your understanding of the topic.
- **Apply what you learn:** As you read, think about how the information presented in the handbooks applies to your own situation. Consider how you might use this information to meet the Global Volunteering Standard.

By following these steps, you can read the handbooks as a set and develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic of international volunteering and volunteer management. Finally, it is important to continue to monitor and evaluate your volunteer program over time to ensure that it remains effective and continues to meet the Standard through the use of the Self-Assessment Tool available on the Global Volunteering Standard Platform.

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**Co-production:** Co-production in development work involves a collaborative approach where diverse stakeholders, including community members, government agencies, NGOs, and others, actively participate in designing, implementing, and evaluating projects. It emphasises partnership, shared decision-making, and mutual accountability, recognizing the value of local knowledge and expertise in creating effective and sustainable solutions. By engaging stakeholders as equal partners, fostering participation and local ownership, co-production aims to enhance the relevance and impact of all efforts, leading to positive outcomes for communities.

**Diversity:** Diversity in volunteering in development refers to the inclusion of people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences in volunteer roles and programs. This can include diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age, culture or language, sexual orientation, religion, ability, socioeconomic status, geographic location, educational background and other characteristics.

The goal of promoting diversity in volunteering is to, in turn, reflect the diversity of the communities being served. This can help to ensure that the needs and perspectives of all members of the community are taken into account, and can also contribute to a more positive and supportive volunteer experience. There are many benefits; for the organisation, diverse volunteers can bring new ideas and perspectives, and can help to build stronger connections with the community; for volunteers, being part of a diverse group can provide opportunities to learn from others, broaden their horizons, and contribute to a more inclusive and welcoming environment. This approach to volunteering can help create a more equitable and just society, by ensuring that all members of the community have the opportunity to participate and contribute to positive change.

**Duty of Care:** Duty of care is an obligation that requires an individual or organisation to act in a responsible manner, taking all necessary precautions to prevent harm to others. The concept of *duty of care* is based on the idea that individuals and organisations have a responsibility to act with care and consideration for the well-being of others. This applies whenever one person or organisation has control or authority over another, or when one person or organisation is in a position to affect the safety or well-being of another.

The specific nature may vary depending on the context in which it is being applied. In general, the *duty of care* requires individuals and organisations to act with reasonable care and diligence, taking into account the specific risks and hazards involved. In the context of volunteering in development, duty of care refers to the responsibility of volunteers to take reasonable steps to protect the well-being of the people they are working with. This may involve following established procedures and protocols, and being aware of any potential risks or hazards. A volunteer has a duty of care to the people they are assisting, as well as to other volunteers and staff members.

A volunteer's duty of care is based on the principle of acting with reasonable care and diligence, taking into account the specific context in which they are working and the potential risks and hazards involved. Organisations, in turn, have a *duty of care* towards their volunteers and staff members, as well as others who work for or with them and who could be affected or impacted by their actions or inaction.

**Equity:** "Equity" focuses on fairness and justice by recognizing that each person or community has different circumstances and needs. Consider that this is different from "equality", which refers to the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities. Equity involves supporting or providing what is necessary to achieve this equality, often requiring the distribution of resources and opportunities based on varying needs. Equity aims to level the playing field by addressing systemic inequalities and providing support to those who need it most, even if it means offering different levels of assistance or opportunity to different individuals or groups.

**Human Rights-based Approach:** This is a framework that prioritises the protection and fulfilment of human rights in all aspects of decision-making, policy development, and implementation, ensuring that individuals are treated with dignity, equality, and fairness. It emphasises accountability, participation, and empowerment, viewing human rights as both the means and ends of sustainable development initiatives.

**Impactful:** This describes something that has a significant effect or influence, often producing meaningful changes or results. It signifies the ability to make a tangible difference or leave a lasting impression in a particular context or community.

**Inclusion:** This term refers to the intentional and active participation of all people, especially those who are marginalised or vulnerable, in decision-making processes and the benefits of any development initiatives. It emphasises creating environments where diverse perspectives are valued, respected, and integrated. Ultimately, inclusion seeks to ensure that no one is left behind, promoting equal opportunities and access to resources for all individuals and communities.

**Intersectionality:** This term, coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, refers to the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, as they apply to an individual or a group, creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. It emphasises the need to consider multiple dimensions of identity and social positioning when understanding experiences of oppression or privilege, acknowledging that individuals can face different and layered forms of discrimination based on their intersecting identities. Thinking from the perspective of intersectionality encourages a more comprehensive and inclusive analysis of social issues, recognising the complexity of lived experiences and systemic inequalities.

**Nature Positive:** This refers to initiatives, policies, or practices that aim to have a net positive impact on the environment and biodiversity. It involves actions that go beyond simply minimising harm or reducing environmental footprint to actively restoring ecosystems, conserving biodiversity, and promoting sustainable interactions with nature. This concept emphasises the importance of preserving and enhancing natural capital for the well-being of both ecosystems and human societies.

**Organisation:** The term “organisation” used in all four documents is the organisation that is responsible for the recruitment and management of volunteers. They are responsible for the placement of volunteers, developing and ensuring adherence to policies and procedures and the overall duty of care of volunteers. They are also responsible to work with the partners in-country regarding the placements.

**Outcome Harvesting:** Outcome Harvesting is an evaluation approach in which evaluators, grant makers, and/or programme managers and staff identify, formulate, verify, analyse and interpret ‘outcomes’ in programming contexts where relations of cause and effect are not fully understood.

**Partners:** The term “partner” used in all four documents refers to the organisation that is hosting the volunteer for the duration of the placement period. The partner is responsible to work with the organisation to develop job descriptions and attend recruitment interviews and ensure all policies are in place, including training for volunteers. They must also work with volunteers to develop workplans, conduct performance reviews and ensure the volunteers’ integration into their workplace.

**Project Management:** Project management is the practice of using knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to complete a series of tasks to deliver value and achieve a desired outcome.

**Safeguarding:** Safeguarding refers to the measures that are put in place to protect individuals from harm, abuse, or exploitation. Safeguarding can take many forms, depending on the context in which it is being applied, but it generally involves creating policies, procedures, and systems to identify, prevent and respond to risks, to the safety and well-being of all, especially vulnerable adults and children.

**Skills Gap Analysis:** A skills gap analysis involves evaluating the proficiency levels of individuals involved in projects against the skills necessary to achieve project objectives. It includes assessing the current skill sets of team members, identifying areas where additional skills are needed to address project challenges or meet goals, and implementing strategies such as training, capacity building, or collaboration to close these gaps. This type of analysis allows organisations to ensure they have the requisite expertise to effectively implement development initiatives and drive positive change in target communities.

**Sustainable:** The term sustainable can be used to describe practices or initiatives that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves the responsible use of resources, consideration for environmental impact, and the promotion of social equity and economic prosperity over the long term.

**Volunteer:** A volunteer is someone who freely offers to contribute their time, skills and experience to an organisation or group or offers to take part in an activity, especially one that aims to help or benefit others. Volunteers are usually not paid more than subsistence for their work, but rather choose to engage in activities or projects out of a sense of personal or social responsibility, or for the satisfaction of helping others. A volunteer may gain work experience, broaden their own skills, develop new interests, learn new languages and/or become more involved with the community or with a cause.

There are many different types of volunteering, ranging from one-time events or projects to ongoing commitments over months and years. Volunteers may work with a variety of organisations, including non-profits, schools, religious institutions, hospitals, and other community groups. They may also work with government agencies or international organisations on a wide range of projects and initiatives.

**Volunteering in Development:** The Global Standard addresses volunteering in development. Volunteering in Development draws on the skills of volunteers to work alongside people and communities to improve their quality of life and support their own capacities to help address poverty and inequality in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Volunteering in development activities must always aim to be impactful and responsible. The standard indicates that Impactful Volunteering delivers measurable and sustainable improvements for poor and marginalised communities that align to a country's national development agendas and to the SDGs. Responsible Volunteering ensures that volunteering activities are locally-identified and designed to respond to the needs of communities as defined by those communities. The selection and preparation of volunteers ensures they can deliver Impactful Volunteering in an equal partnership with the community. In the delivery of these activities, no harm will come to members of the community or volunteers.