



# The Global Volunteering Standard

Version 3





## About Forum

The International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum) is the global network of organisations working through volunteers to achieve sustainable development. Forum exists to share knowledge, improve practice, set standards and strengthen cooperation across the volunteering and development sectors. We promote and support volunteering through research, mutual learning and by setting standards. Forum is a virtual network with a diverse global membership, including both governmental and non-governmental organisations.

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# Introduction

Since our first conversations about developing a Global Volunteering Standard nearly a decade ago, Forum's focus has been on promoting and supporting responsible and impactful volunteering. In this newly revised edition, that commitment remains as strong as ever.

Volunteers make a substantial and meaningful contribution to sustainable development—especially when their work is well-supported, thoughtfully designed and grounded in genuine partnership with the communities they serve. The Global Volunteering Standard exists to help organisations strengthen that contribution, offering a practical framework for good practice.

This latest version has been thoroughly reviewed and updated by the Forum Standards Working Group, with input from experts and practitioners across the volunteering and development sector. The review focused on making the Standard simpler to read, easier to use and more reflective of current thinking on good practice. It reflects advances in safeguarding, decolonisation, climate action and particularly duty of care.

In today's world, duty of care goes beyond volunteer safety. It speaks to an organisation's responsibility to prevent harm and promote wellbeing—for volunteers, for staff and for the communities they work with. This edition strengthens that commitment, providing clearer guidance on how to identify and manage risks, support mental and physical health, and ensure safeguarding is embedded at every stage of the volunteer journey and programme cycle.

As we approach the International Year for Volunteers for Sustainable Development in 2026, this revised Standard offers a timely opportunity to reflect; strengthen practice; recommit to responsible and impactful volunteering worldwide; and ensure volunteering continues to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development.

**Mel Gow and Boram Kim**

Co-Chairs, Forum Standards Working Group  
Members of the Forum Board

A photograph of a woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing an orange shirt, sitting at a dark wooden table. She is smiling and looking towards a young child with dark hair, who is wearing a pink shirt and is seen from the side. The woman's hands are clasped near her face. On the table, there is a small piece of white paper with handwritten text in Devanagari script. The background is slightly blurred, showing a window with a wooden frame and some outdoor greenery.

## Raising the Standard for Global Volunteering



# How to use the Global Volunteering Standard: a practical guide

The Global Volunteering Standard is a comprehensive framework designed to help organisations that work with volunteers improve the quality, impact and responsibility of their programmes. This guide provides step-by-step instructions for using the Standard to assess, plan and strengthen your volunteering practice.

## Who should use the Standard?

The Standard is intended for any organisation working with volunteers for sustainable development, whether international, national or community-based. You can use it to:

- assess your current practices
- identify strengths and gaps
- plan improvements
- promote a culture of reflection and learning

Its online home is the Global Volunteering Standard Platform ([standard.forum-ids.org](https://standard.forum-ids.org)), where you'll find the full Standard, an interactive self-assessment tool and a growing library of resources.

# The Standard's structure

The Standard is organised into four key themes:

- 01 Planning and Designing Volunteer Placements

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- 02 Duty of Care

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- 03 Managing Volunteer Placements

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- 04 Debriefing and Evaluation

Each **theme** is broken down into **areas** and **topics**.

Under each topic, you'll find:

- **Guiding questions** – used for reflection and learning
- **Indicators** – used for assessment and evaluation

This structure (Theme > Area > Topic > Guiding Questions + Indicators) is applied to all sections for clarity and ease of use.

## ● Example

# How the structure works

## THEME AND AREA

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### **Theme 1: Planning and Designing Volunteer Placements**

This theme helps organisations design ethical and effective placements aligned with Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Area 1: Partnerships**

## TOPIC

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### **Selecting partners with whom you will work to embed volunteers**

## GUIDING QUESTION (LEARNING)

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“What criteria does our organisation apply when selecting new partners? How were these criteria developed, and who was involved in the process?”

*Use this to prompt internal discussion and reflect on whether your current approach aligns with your values and goals.*

## INDICATOR (EVALUATION)

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“Our organisation has identified criteria that guide us in choosing which partners we will work with to embed volunteers, and we ensure these criteria are consistently applied and shared openly with partners.”

*Use this to assess whether your approach is consistent, documented and transparent.*

You don't need to engage with every theme or area at once.  
Start with what matters most to your organisation.

# Why guiding questions and indicators?

The inclusion of both guiding questions and indicators reflects two different ways of using the Standard:

## 01

### THE LEARNING APPROACH

(recommended starting point)

Use the guiding questions to explore your current practices and spark discussion across teams. This approach is best if you are new to the Standard or looking to encourage shared reflection.

You can:

- use questions to reflect on current practice
- facilitate team conversations and workshops
- keep notes on responses, insights and actions

## 02

### THE EVALUATION APPROACH

Use the indicators to assess how well your organisation aligns with the Standard. This structured approach is useful if you:

- are already familiar with the Standard
- have used the learning approach and want to go deeper
- want to track your progress over time

Each indicator is grouped by level: **Essential**, **Advanced** and **Excellence**. Start with Essential and work up.

## Getting started

- Become familiar with the Standard's structure and content
- Decide what you want to achieve and which areas you will focus on
- Choose whether to begin with the learning or evaluation approach
- Use the guiding questions or indicators to begin your review
- Remember: The Global Volunteering Standard is not a checklist to be completed once. It's a flexible framework for ongoing reflection, improvement and accountability in your organisation's work with volunteers.

## Support and contact:

Find additional tools and guidance at [standard.forum-ids.org](https://standard.forum-ids.org), including:

- an interactive self-assessment tool
- a resource library
- good practice handbooks based on the Standard

If you need help or have questions, contact Forum at: [globalvolunteeringstandard@forum-ids.org](mailto:globalvolunteeringstandard@forum-ids.org)

# Theme 1

## Planning and Designing Volunteer Placements

This theme helps your organisation to design volunteer programmes that are effective, ethical and aligned with long-term goals. This includes working with partners with shared values and whose work aligns with efforts to achieve sustainable development.

When creating volunteer placements, you should involve communities, use local knowledge and make sure your work respects local contexts, avoids harm, and considers environmental and decolonisation issues.

You should also respond to community-identified needs, involve local people in planning, delivery and evaluation, and ensure you have a plan to achieve lasting results after volunteers leave. Good management and ethical practices should guide all stages of your work.

This theme focuses on three areas: Partnerships, Aligning Purpose with Values and Volunteer Placements.



# Partnerships

This area focuses on building strong, fair and respectful relationships with partner organisations that utilise volunteers. It encourages organisations to think carefully about how these partnerships are created, maintained and used to support shared goals. Actions like thinking carefully and critically about how partnerships are formed and sustained, assessing partners carefully, sharing resources and communicating well are not just practical tasks—they demonstrate values like transparency, mutual respect and shared responsibility. This area also asks organisations to think about power dynamics, ethics, and whether their goals and visions match those of their partners.

## TOPIC

### 1.1 Selecting partners with whom you will work to embed volunteers

Organisations should ensure their selection criteria for partner organisations align with their values, goals and ethical standards. They should conduct thorough due diligence to assess each partner’s capacity, competencies and alignment with their organisation’s mission.

Organisations should also establish mechanisms to identify and address any potential misalignments or risks early on.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1) What criteria does our organisation apply when selecting new partners? How were these criteria developed, and who was involved in the process? (Essential)</p> <p>2a) Do we use a due diligence check to ensure our partners uphold legal and ethical standards, and their capabilities and reputation align with our organisational goals? (Essential)</p> <p>2b) How do we verify potential partners’ capacity and competencies? (Essential)</p> <p>3) How do we ensure each partner’s mission, goals and values align with those of the volunteer placement? (Advanced)</p> <p>4) How do we ensure each partner’s approach to global, regional and national development frameworks align with ours? (Excellence)</p> <p>5) Do we have mechanisms in place to identify and address contradictions or potential points of friction between our organisation and our partners? (Excellence)</p> <p>6) Do we have examples of when the due diligence process has worked well or didn’t work, and do we understand the reasons why? (Excellence)</p> | <p>1) Our organisation has identified criteria that guide us in choosing which partners we will work with to embed volunteers, and we ensure these criteria are consistently applied and shared openly with partners. (Essential)</p> <p>2) Partner organisations are assessed using a due diligence approach to ensure they have the capacity to properly support a volunteer. (Essential)</p> <p>3) Our organisation has mechanisms in place to verify that partners’ mission, vision and values align with ours and with the goals of the volunteer placement, and we ensure these mechanisms are consistently applied. (Advanced)</p> <p>4) Our organisation ensures our partners’ approach to global, regional and national development frameworks is shared by us, and we work to identify and address contradictions or potential points of friction. (Excellence)</p> |

## TOPIC

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### 1.2 Managing partnerships

Partnerships are based on clear, mutually beneficial agreements that define roles, responsibilities and expectations. Organisations regularly review these agreements, while also establishing fair conflict resolution processes.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1a) How do we collaboratively develop agreements with our partners, and to what extent do these agreements reflect mutual understanding, shared goals and balanced responsibilities? (Essential)

1b) How regularly do we assess and adapt our agreements with partners to ensure they remain relevant and effective? (Essential)

2) What processes do we have in place for resolving conflicts or disagreements with our partners? (Essential)

3a) How do we ensure the necessary resources are clearly identified, agreed upon and secured with all relevant stakeholders before project implementation? (Advanced)

3b) How do we evaluate and match volunteer skills and experience to the project's specific needs? (Advanced)

4) How do we verify that our partners comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements? (Excellence)

5) How do we facilitate knowledge-sharing and capacity-building among our partners and donors? (Excellence)

6a) How effectively do our communication and engagement mechanisms facilitate shared decision-making with partners, and how do we ensure meaningful opportunities to provide feedback? (Excellence)

6b) Do we conduct regular assessments of the power dynamics between our organisation and our partners? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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1a) We and our partners mutually develop and sign an agreement outlining each of our contributions, expectations, responsibilities and accountabilities. (Essential)

1b) We and our partners review this agreement together throughout a mutually agreed partnership period and keep it securely on record. (Essential)

2) We commit, with our partners, to a transparent process for resolving any conflicts or disagreements that may arise during the partnership, so issues are addressed promptly and fairly. (Essential)

3) With our partners, we will regularly assess power dynamics and engage in power-sharing practices to ensure equitable partnership between partners with more resources and those with fewer. (Essential)

4) Partners ensure all local legal and regulatory requirements are met, including compliance with laws and ethical standards. (Essential)

5) Partners ensure volunteer skills and experience are accurately matched to the volunteer placement's aims and activities, and all roles are fully costed. (Advanced)

6) Our organisation facilitates knowledge-sharing and capacity-strengthening among partners and donors to enhance skills, improve practices and promote mutual learning. (Excellence)

1.2 Managing partnerships (continued)

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>7a) How effectively do we engage donors in the programme development process, and how well do we integrate their contributions and expectations into the design and implementation of our volunteer programmes and placements? (Excellence)</p> <p>7b) How well do we ensure partners have a clear and shared understanding of the donor's role, responsibilities and control mechanisms, and how do we address any ambiguities or misunderstandings? (Excellence)</p> | <p>7) Our organisation has clear, well-documented processes for shared decision-making, ensuring all relevant stakeholders are involved in key decisions. These processes include transparent criteria for resource distribution. We regularly monitor and review these mechanisms to ensure consistent application and improvement. (Excellence)</p> <p>8a) Our organisation actively engages donors in the programme development process, ensuring their contributions, expectations and strategic goals are integrated into projects' design and implementation. (Excellence)</p> <p>8b) Partners maintain a mutual understanding of the donor's role, ensuring clarity on contributions, responsibilities and control mechanisms, with agreements that outline how these are managed within the partnership. (Excellence)</p> |

### 1.3 Facilitating communication

To facilitate communication, organisations establish reliable and accessible mechanisms that promote ongoing collaboration throughout the partnership. These mechanisms should be regularly reviewed and updated.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1) What communication mechanisms have we established to facilitate collaboration with our partners? How do we make sure they work well and are accessible to all stakeholders? (Essential)

2a) How do we ensure relevant information is effectively communicated to all parties throughout the volunteer placements? (Advanced)

2b) How do we review and update our communication strategies to meet all partners' needs? (Advanced)

2c) How do we address communication challenges or barriers that arise during volunteer placements? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

1) Partners establish reliable mechanisms for communication to ensure collaborative working throughout the volunteer placement. (Essential)

2) Partners review and update these mechanisms regularly to meet the needs of the volunteer placement and its stakeholders. (Advanced)



● Area 2

# Aligning purpose with values

This area encourages organisations to think deeply about the core principles that guide their work. It asks them to reflect on their purpose, values, and the wider social and environmental contexts in which they work.

Organisations should consider how their approach to volunteering reflects their core values and fits with global development frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as regional, national and even local-level goals and strategies. This means thinking about the role of volunteering in their work, and how their volunteer programme might support or challenge global power structures and inequalities.

## TOPIC

### 2.1 Defining the role of volunteering

Organisations clearly articulate why they engage volunteers and how their values shape this approach, ensuring their volunteer activities are purposeful and well-integrated.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>1) How do we understand the role of volunteers in our organisation? Why do we engage volunteers? (Essential)</div> <div>2) How do our organisation's values align with our approach to volunteering? What messages do we convey about the role of volunteering in our organisation? (Excellence)</div> <div>3) When and how do we reflect on our approach to volunteering and the role of volunteers in development? (Excellence)</div> | <div>1) Our organisation has a volunteering policy or an equivalent document in place, setting out the role of volunteering in our work and the main objectives of our volunteering activities. (Essential)</div> <div>2) The policy shows how our organisation's values align with our approach to volunteering and illustrates which messages we convey about the role of volunteering. (Excellence)</div> <div>3) The policy was developed through a participatory process that included partners and volunteers. (Excellence)</div> <div>4) The policy is reviewed and assessed regularly (at least every two years), and the results of these reviews are documented. (Advanced)</div> |

## 2.2 Considering sustainable development

The contribution to global, regional and national development frameworks is defined, and organisations must ensure their volunteer activities are designed to promote responsible and impactful development.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1a) Do we consider ourselves a development organisation? If yes, what does development mean to our organisation? How do we define development in the context of our work? (Essential)

1b) What role do global, regional and national development frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) play in our goals, aims and work? What aspects of our work contribute to achieving the SDGs, even if we do not identify as a development organisation? (Essential)

1c) How do we think about the specific contributions our volunteer activities make to these frameworks? (Essential)

### INDICATORS

1) Our organisation has clearly defined its contribution to sustainable development through volunteer activities. (Essential)

2) Our organisation ensures all volunteering activities are designed and implemented in alignment with the principles of sustainable development, as well as responsible and impactful volunteering. (Essential)



## 2.3 Enabling decolonisation

Organisations actively confront and address the power imbalances and historical inequalities embedded in international development work and volunteering.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1a) What steps are we taking to confront the inequalities and imbalances inherent in international development and in volunteering, and what are we doing to address power imbalances in our projects and partnerships? (Essential)
- 1b) How do we educate our staff and volunteers about colonial history and its impact on international development in general, as well as on volunteering in development? (Essential)
- 1c) Have we identified and discussed with our partners the contradictions between traditional development discourse and decolonisation principles in our work? (Essential)
- 2a) How do we ensure our volunteer programmes and activities respect and prioritise local knowledge, cultures and leadership, while actively supporting and elevating existing local initiatives and processes? (Advanced)
- 2b) What measures do we take to ensure our work supports and participates in existing local initiatives rather than competing with them? (Advanced)
- 3) How do we support volunteers to critically examine their (possibly privileged) positions and roles in a post-colonial world? In our training, do we encourage volunteers to reflect on the consequences of such privilege for their placements? (Advanced)
- 4) How do we engage in continuous learning and improvement regarding decolonising our practices? (Excellence)

### INDICATORS

- 1) Our organisation takes active steps to confront and address the inequalities and power imbalances inherent in international development and volunteering, ensuring projects and partnerships are designed to rectify these imbalances and promote equitable collaboration. (Essential)
- 2) Volunteer placements and organisational activities are designed to respect and prioritise local knowledge, cultures and leadership, ensuring participation in and support for existing local initiatives, processes and professional life without interference or competition. (Advanced)
- 3a) Our volunteers understand and appreciate the socio-political context of the communities they serve, including the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism or other mechanisms of suppression or marginalisation. (Advanced)
- 3b) Volunteers question their position, and any privilege this position brings, in an interdependent and post-colonial world, and the potential consequences on their placement. (Advanced)
- 4) Our organisation commits to continuous learning and improvement in decolonising its volunteering practices and development approaches, including by ensuring local-level partners are listened to and meaningfully included in decision-making. (Excellence)

### 2.4 Taking climate action

Organisations regularly reflect on their work's environmental impact and integrate principles of conservation and climate into all volunteer projects and placements.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1a) As an organisation, do we reflect on the effects of the climate crisis and how our work might affect the environment? How do we do this? (Essential)

1b) How do we evaluate our contributions to the conservation of nature and reducing environmental harm? (Advanced)

2a) How do we ensure the principles of conservation, reducing environmental harm and promoting climate resilience are integrated into the design of volunteer placements? (Advanced)

2b) Can we think of examples of how these principles have influenced our project design and volunteer activities? (Excellence)

3) Do we know our organisation's carbon footprint, and have we developed action plans to reduce our environmental impact? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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1) Our organisation regularly reflects on and assesses its role and potential regarding the conservation of nature, both positive and negative. (Essential)

2) The principles of conserving nature, reducing harm to the environment and promoting climate resilience inform and guide the design and implementation of all projects and volunteer placements. (Advanced)

3) Threats to the environment due to project implementation and volunteer placement are identified, and mitigation measures are designed and implemented to address them. (Excellence)

4) Our organisation calculates the carbon footprint of its project implementation, at a minimum measuring the impact of travel on an annual basis. These calculations are used to develop an action plan to reduce our carbon footprint where possible. (Excellence)

● Area 3

# Volunteer placements

This area examines how volunteer placements connect to bigger development and ethical considerations. It asks organisations to reflect on the true purpose of their volunteer work and its impact on systems and communities.

It aims to make sure that volunteer roles are well-planned and support long-term development in a way that respects local contexts. This means including community voices at every stage—from identifying needs to deciding what success looks like—so volunteer efforts help local initiatives rather than interfere with them.

## TOPIC

### 3.1 Identifying placements

Organisations establish clear criteria for selecting volunteer placements that align with their strategic goals and contribute to global, regional and national development frameworks, ensuring placements are well-suited to achieving long-term, meaningful impact.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>1) What specific criteria have we established for selecting volunteer placements, and how do we ensure they are consistently applied? (Essential)</div> <div>2) How do we know each of our volunteer placements will advance the achievement of the global, regional and national development frameworks? (Advanced)</div> <div>3) What processes exist to monitor and evaluate our volunteer placements, and how do we address any issues that may arise? (Excellence)</div> | <div>1) Our organisation has identified criteria to choose placements for volunteers. (Essential)</div> <div>2) Placements are designed with partner organisations to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of global, regional and national development frameworks, with clear alignment to specific targets and measurable impact. (Advanced)</div> <div>3) Our organisation regularly monitors and evaluates the volunteer placement environment to ensure it remains safe, supportive, and conducive to achieving the placement's objectives. (Excellence)</div> |

## TOPIC

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### 3.2 Developing volunteer activities

This topic emphasises the importance of co-creating placements with local communities to ensure the activities are relevant, sustainable and aligned with the community's development goals, while adhering to the 'do no harm' principle.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1) How do we think about and assess needs before designing volunteer placements or activities? How do we ensure the needs assessment accurately reflects the community's current needs and priorities? (Essential)
- 2) Do we base the design of volunteer placements on research and organisational learning? (Essential)
- 3) Do we actively involve the community in every step of the volunteer placement process, from identifying strategic goals, to defining scope and success criteria, to ensuring their needs and perspectives are fully integrated? (Essential)
  - 4a) What strategies do we use to ensure our volunteer placements have a long-term sustainable development impact? (Essential)
  - 4b) What mechanisms are in place to protect and promote the community members' rights during volunteer placements? (Essential)
  - 4c) Do we reflect on the "do no harm" principle when designing projects with volunteers? How do we address the possibility that projects may have unintended negative consequences for the communities they aim to serve? How do we identify and mitigate these risks? (Essential)
- 5) How do we ensure each volunteer placement contributes to a wider, longer-term development programme? (Excellence)
- 6) How do we communicate our contribution to global, regional and national development frameworks to our partners and the wider community? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1) Each volunteer placement is based on a needs assessment done together with partner organisations. (Essential)
- 2) The design of volunteer placements is based on research, organisational learning and consultation with partner organisations (Essential)
  - 3a) Our organisation involves the partner organisation in every step of the volunteer placement process, from identifying strategic goals to defining scope and success criteria, ensuring their active participation and alignment with local needs. (Essential)
  - 3b) Our organisation adheres to the principle of 'do no harm' during the creation of volunteer placements. (Essential)
- 4) Our organisation ensures all volunteer placements contribute to long-term sustainable development impact. (Essential)
- 5) Our organisation and our partner organisations co-conduct a thorough community-led context assessment for each volunteer placement. (Advanced)
- 6) There is a clear sustainability plan to which volunteers and partners contribute. (Excellence)

### 3.3 Ensuring labour market neutrality

Organisations ensure volunteer placements do not interfere with local employment opportunities or displace paid labour. This emphasises the need for volunteer roles to complement rather than compete with local professionals.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1) How does our organisation consider the relationship between volunteer placements and the job market or paid staff? How do we make sure volunteers do not take work away from local communities? (Essential)
- 2) Do we undertake labour market research to understand what professional skills are available locally? (Essential)

#### INDICATORS

- 1) Volunteer placements do not take away work from local communities. (Essential)
- 2) Organisations undertake labour market research to understand what professional skills are available locally. (Essential)



# Theme 2

## Duty of Care

This theme centres on duty of care—the responsibility of organisations to safeguard the health, safety, security, and wellbeing of their staff and volunteers. It also extends to a commitment toward the communities they serve, ensuring that the organisation and its representatives protect them and prevent any harm within the areas where they operate.

Organisations and their partners must recognise they have a duty to prevent physical or psychological harm to volunteers, staff and community members. Duty of care applies to any organisation working with volunteers in a community, no matter how long they are there.



## ● Area 4

# Safety and security

This area examines an organisation's duty to keep volunteers and others safe.

It includes understanding the risks volunteers and members of the communities they work with might face, including risks posed by volunteers themselves, and finding ways to reduce them. It considers how organisations think about safety and security where they work, and how local partners and community members help to identify and understand these risks.

It looks at how the organisation prepares for risks—how they work to prevent problems, keep an eye on things and respond if something happens. It also covers how they train and inform volunteers, staff and community members about safety.

Finally, it talks about the need for a plan for emergencies or serious situations.

## TOPIC

### 4.1 Clear approach to risk

Organisations have a clearly articulated and well-understood approach to risk.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1) How do we communicate safety and security mechanisms within our organisation and ensure our approach to safety, security and risk management is formalised? (Essential)</p> <p>2) Do staff and volunteers understand how much risk the organisation is willing to accept to achieve its aims (i.e., risk tolerance) and where its 'red lines' are (i.e., risk threshold)? (Essential)</p> <p>3) Is our approach to risk management well-socialised and communicated within the organisation? If not, why? (Advanced)</p> <p>4) How do staff, volunteers or community members escalate issues if they feel risk levels are getting too high? Is this process accessible to all and well-socialised and communicated? (Excellence)</p> | <p>1) Our organisation has a safety and security policy, and associated procedures, which are made available to volunteers before their placement starts. (Essential)</p> <p>2) Our organisation has a publicly available statement, or a risk matrix or register, clarifying potential threats that could affect community members and volunteers, as well as the organisation's tolerance to these risks. (Advanced)</p> <p>3) The communities we work with are made aware of how to report any new or emerging risks, incident trends or concerns to the organisation, either directly to staff or through an email reporting system. (Advanced)</p> <p>4) A clear escalation process outlines how to escalate concerns, and to whom, if risk levels change or get close to the organisation's risk threshold. (Advanced)</p> <p>5) Risk tolerances, thresholds and approach to risk are well-communicated, socialised and understood by all staff, partners and volunteers. (Excellence)</p> |

### 4.2 Risk identification and mitigation

Risk identification and mitigation strategies are established during the project's planning and budgeting stage.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1) How do we approach conversations about security with partner organisations and the wider host community as part of programme planning? Do these conversations result in realistic and practical risk mitigation measures? (Essential)
- 2) Do these discussions involve the local community and partners, and consider local contexts? (Advanced)
- 3) Do we check what safety and security provisions local communities and partner organisations have in place, and does this process help identify possible gaps or areas where support may be needed? (Advanced)
- 4) Does our budget process draw on this risk assessment to factor in the costs of safety and security needs and mitigation measures? Does it include staff costs related to safety and security? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1) Our organisation completes risk assessments as part of every programme's planning stage. (Essential)
- 2) Staff who are trained and competent in safety and security review all programme designs during the planning stage. (Essential)
- 3) The wider staff team and relevant delivery partners are actively involved in the creation and review of risk assessments. (Advanced)
- 4) Appropriate due-diligence checks are carried out on host communities and partner organisations. (Advanced)
- 5) Our organisation has a specific budget line, or the ability to draw on extra funds, for safety and security mitigation and response measures. (Advanced)
- 6) Our budgets consider staff costs and training needs related to safety and security. (Excellence)

4.3 Safety and security resources, capacity and training

Organisations have appropriate resources, capacity and training in place for safety and security issues.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1) Does our organisation have a designated security focal point, and what role do they play? This is a trained individual responsible for monitoring and communicating safety and security risks that may affect the project, community or volunteers. (Essential)</p> <p>2) How do we ensure staff are made aware of our organisation’s internal safety and security guidance? Is there a way of ensuring training is accessible and appropriate for staff needs and responsibilities? (Advanced)</p> | <p>1) Our organisation has a competent, trained security focal point in place. (Essential)</p> <p>2) Staff, volunteers and partners have access to and understand our security plans and procedures, to ensure all key risks are mitigated. (Advanced)</p> <p>3) At the start of their placement, volunteers are trained on specific risks and their role in managing them. During longer-term placements, volunteers receive periodic refresher security training. (Advanced)</p> <p>4) All of our staff receive appropriate safety and security training on a regular basis. (Excellence)</p> |



### 4.4 Understanding, local engagement and informed consent

Organisations work to promote understanding of safety and security risks and mitigation among staff, volunteers and other stakeholders.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1) Do our volunteers receive a written or verbal information briefing on safety and security risks and mitigation measures at the start of their placement? (Essential)
- 2) How do we provide pre-travel risk management support and advice to international volunteers (for example, signposting them to government travel advisories, providing country information and/or sharing risks and safety measures?) (Essential)
- 3) Are host communities and partners made aware of the potential risks involved in hosting volunteers? (Advanced)
- 4) How does our organisation agree on and establish roles and responsibilities with host communities, partner organisations and volunteers? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1) All volunteers receive pre-placement information on the risks they may face and the organisational mitigation measures in place. (Essential)
- 2) All volunteers are asked to formally consent to the risks the placement presents, based on a full understanding of these risks. Organisations hold evidence that volunteers have made an informed choice to participate. (Advanced)
- 3) Organisations share with their partners and, where relevant, host community members the potential risks involved in working with volunteers, and they formally consent to take part in any planned activities. (Advanced)
- 4) Memorandums of understanding or other formal agreements are in place between our organisation, the partner organisation and the volunteer, clearly setting out roles and responsibilities. (Advanced)

### 4.5 Monitoring and reporting

Organisations have processes in place for monitoring and reporting safety and security in volunteer placement contexts.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1) How do we review risk assessments or monitor changes to safety and security related to volunteer programme? (Essential)
- 2) How do we keep track of any safety or security concerns, near-misses or incidents? (Essential)
- 3) How do we check in with volunteers on questions related to safety and security during their placements? (Essential)
- 4) How often do we review safety and security concerns, near-misses and incidents, create clear follow-up actions and share lessons learned to update our mitigation measures? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1) Our organisation has an established check-in procedure for volunteers, with an identified lead person. This system is made clear to both the volunteer and the lead person. (Essential)
- 2) Our organisation has a standard format and process for incident reporting, and keeps a log of all incidents, near-misses and concerns. This could be managed through a secure messaging system like WhatsApp, an anonymous physical post box, an email address, an app or through line managers. (Essential)
- 3) Our organisation regularly reviews the incident log and shares lessons learned. (Advanced)
- 4) Risk assessments are reviewed and updated at least annually, or more frequently where the environment, activities or programmes change. (Excellence)
- 5) Communities, staff and volunteers are made aware of how to report new or emerging risks to the organisation, and there are accessible ways to report concerns, near-misses and incidents. (Excellence)

4.6 Appropriate emergency response

Organisations have procedures in place to respond appropriately to emergencies.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div><div>GUIDING QUESTIONS</div><div><div>1) Do we have clear and well-understood procedures for how our organisation would manage an incident or emergency involving a volunteer? (Essential)</div><div>2) Would our staff, volunteers, host communities and partner organisations know what to do and how to access further help if there was a serious incident? (Essential)</div><div>3) How is incident response information shared with staff at our organisation and with volunteers, host communities and partner organisations? (Advanced)</div><div>4) Do all staff and volunteers know who to contact for further support in the event of an incident or emergency? (Advanced)</div></div></div> | <div><div>INDICATORS</div><div><div>1) Our organisation has an incident management or emergency plan in place. (Essential)</div><div>2) Staff of our organisation and our partner organisations have access to, and understand, emergency plans for every on-site placement location. These plans are updated at a defined frequency. (Essential)</div><div>3) Emergency plans include guidance on roles and responsibilities, how to respond to an emergency, escalation communications and key contacts, including suitable medical facilities, transport, communications and local networks. (Essential)</div><div>4) Our organisation provides emergency phone number(s) and useful emergency contacts to volunteers and partners. (Essential)</div><div>5) Emergency calls are responded to consistently, using security plans and incident reporting procedures. (Advanced)</div><div>6) Our organisation undertakes and acts on findings from debriefings, evaluation and reviews following all serious incidents, and these are appropriately documented. (Excellence)</div></div></div> |
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## ● Area 5

# Safeguarding, protection and child rights

Every organisation that delivers development or humanitarian activities has a duty to safeguard volunteers, staff, participants and donors. This area outlines the essential safeguarding measures an organisation must have in place to create an environment where everyone feels—and is—safe from harm.

Creating a safe and welcoming culture, where everyone is respected and valued, is key. Organisations must actively prevent exploitation, abuse, harassment, bullying and neglect in all aspects of their work.

This section looks at how organisations can understand the safeguarding risks in the contexts of where they operate; raise awareness among staff, volunteers and community members; and put effective prevention measures in place. It also covers the importance of safe, secure, and accessible ways for people to report concerns, along with clear procedures for how to respond.



## TOPIC

### 5.1 Raising awareness

Organisations work to raise awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues among staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1) How does our organisation assess and mitigate against possible safeguarding risks? (Essential)
- 2) How do we ensure staff and volunteers are clear on what our safeguarding policy covers and what procedures to follow? (Essential)
- 3) How do staff, volunteers, local communities and partners report concerns? Can this be done anonymously? (Essential)
- 4) How do we ensure accountability and ownership of safeguarding within our organisation? (Essential)
- 5) How do we minimise risk to those whose images are used by our organisation, in order to show respect and avoid stereotypes? Are staff and volunteers made aware of these risks? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

- 1) Our organisation has a publicly available safeguarding policy and associated procedures, including a definition of safeguarding and organisational commitments to child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment toward any individual. (Essential)
- 2) Our organisation has a named safeguarding focal point. All volunteers are introduced to this person, virtually or in person, at the start of their placement. (Essential)
- 3) Our organisation has whistleblowing and reporting mechanisms and associated disciplinary procedures to prevent, address and redress inappropriate behaviour of staff, volunteers, contracted or other personnel toward each other, children, vulnerable adults and the wider community. (Advanced)
- 4) Staff and volunteers are aware of and understand organisational safeguarding procedures and receive relevant and regular training on child and vulnerable adult protection. (Excellence)
- 5) Our organisation uses appropriately skilled, qualified and experienced personnel to provide pre-placement and ongoing training to volunteers about their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding and child protection. (Advanced)
- 6) Our organisation has a safeguarding committee or mechanism that reviews and monitors compliance with safeguarding procedures. (Excellence)
- 7) Our organisation has policies or guidelines for messaging and imagery, including of children, which ensure the local community and individuals are portrayed accurately and not put at risk, sensationalised or stereotyped. Staff and volunteers are aware of and comply with these procedures. (Excellence)

### 5.2 Ensuring prevention

As much as possible, organisations take steps to mitigate the risk of safeguarding incidents.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1) Is there a safeguarding lead at our organisation? How are they supported by the senior management? (Essential)
- 2) How does our organisation review safeguarding risks? (Essential)
- 3) How does our organisation communicate safeguarding risks and procedures to make sure they are understood by all staff, local communities, partners and volunteers? (Essential)
- 4) How does our organisation ensure the relationships between volunteers, the host community and partners are characterised by respect for the rights of all? (Essential)
- 5) Does our organisation have a policy to not work with organisations and companies with orphanages and other residential care centres incorporated in their offerings? (Essential)
- 6) Have we made clear that our organisation does not allow or facilitate volunteering of any type in orphanages or residential care institutions for children? (Essential)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1) Our organisation carries out risk assessments to ensure the health and wellbeing of already vulnerable children or adults is neither worsened nor perpetuated by our volunteer placements. (Essential)
- 2) Our organisation carries out child rights impact and risk assessments of volunteering programmes, placements and activities. We avoid or discontinue any activities that negatively impact children's rights or wellbeing. (Essential)
- 3) Our organisation obtains personal and/or professional references and undertakes criminal and/or another form of appropriate background check of all volunteers. (Essential)
- 4) Our organisation commits to prioritising the rights and best interests of children in volunteering programmes, and to aligning programmes with best practices in the protection of children. This means, among other principles, not permitting or facilitating visiting or volunteering in orphanages and other residential care facilities for children. (Essential)
- 5) Our organisation clearly articulates, in its policy framework, that we do not facilitate orphanage tourism or volunteering, either directly or through partners or third-party providers or companies. In addition, we have a process for vetting prospective partners to ensure they do not partner with organisations or companies that engage in these practices. (Essential)
- 6) Our organisation implements a Code of Conduct or set of rules that outlines appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, and all volunteers formally agree to abide by it. (Advanced)

5.3 Reporting

Organisations have procedures in place to report safeguarding issues, concerns and incidents.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| <div><div>GUIDING QUESTIONS</div><div><div>1) What mechanisms exist for reporting and logging safeguarding issues, concerns and incidents? Are there mechanisms to report anonymously? (Essential)</div><div>2) How do we ensure volunteers know how to report when they have a concern? (Essential)</div><div>3) How do we enable appropriate and easy access to reporting procedures and mechanisms for the communities and partners that we engage with? (Advanced)</div></div></div> | <div><div>INDICATORS</div><div><div>1) Our organisation has written procedures, which are anonymous, accessible and locally appropriate, providing step-by-step guidance on reporting safeguarding concerns and incidents involving volunteers. (Essential)</div><div>2) All volunteers are made aware of the complaints and grievance policy, and reporting procedures, at the beginning of their placement. (Essential)</div><div>3) Our organisation logs all safeguarding concerns and reports related to volunteers and regularly reviews this log, sharing lessons learned with appropriate stakeholders. (Advanced)</div><div>4) Staff and volunteers receive regular training on their responsibilities and procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns, including sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, workplace bullying and gender-based violence. (Excellence)</div></div></div> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

5.4 Response to incidents

Organisations have procedures in place to respond to safeguarding incidents.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1) Do staff in our organisation know what to do if an investigation is required to respond to a safeguarding allegation? (Essential)</p> <p>2) Are there appropriate organisations—local, national, international—who could support us, and to whom we could signpost volunteers or affected staff if they have a safeguarding concern or have been affected by sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment? (Advanced)</p> | <p>1) Our organisation has clearly defined response procedures for any safeguarding reports or concerns related to volunteers. (Essential)</p> <p>2) Our organisation commits to respond to all safeguarding reports from or related to volunteers within a specified timeframe. (Essential)</p> <p>3) Our organisation can signpost volunteers or affected staff to appropriate referral services for survivors of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, or gender-based violence. (Advanced)</p> <p>4) Our organisation has trained staff, or access to external support, to carry out safeguarding investigations related to volunteers in an appropriate manner. (Excellence)</p> |



● Area 6

# Health and wellbeing

To ensure the best outcomes for volunteers, organisations and community members, it is important to support the physical, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing of everyone involved.

This area outlines the measures organisations should have in place to assess volunteers’ needs before a placement begins, as well as how to support them during and after their placements. It also considers the potential impact of volunteers on the mental health and wellbeing of the community members they interact with—especially those who may be more vulnerable.

## TOPIC

### 6.1 Health and wellbeing assessment

Organisations assess volunteers’ health and wellbeing before placement.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>GUIDING QUESTIONS</div> <div><div>1) How does our organisation assess volunteers’ health or medical details before their placements begin? (Essential)</div><div>2) How do we protect the volunteers’ personal health data? (Essential)</div></div> | <div>INDICATORS</div> <div><div>1) Our organisation collects and screens relevant health and medical information about the volunteer, with their consent, before accepting them on any placement. (Essential)</div><div>2) Where necessary and with the volunteer’s consent, health and medical information is shared with partner organisations to minimise risk. (Essential)</div><div>3) Our organisation has clear, well-understood data protection procedures in place to securely store and manage volunteers’ personal information, in line with all relevant legislative requirements. (Essential)</div></div> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### 6.2 Volunteer health

Organisations promote and support volunteers' physical and mental health.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1) How do we brief volunteers on common health and wellbeing risks before their placement? (Essential)
- 2) How do we provide physical health and wellbeing support, including first aid, to volunteers who require it? (Essential)
- 3) What do we do if someone requires mental health first aid or support? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1) Our organisation delivers pre-placement training on health and wellbeing, which includes, at a minimum:
  - Common or localised physical health issues and complaints and how to prevent and manage them (e.g., local diseases, specific health risks associated with project activities)
  - Maintaining your own mental health and how to seek support from the organisation, if required (Essential)
- 2) All organisation and partner staff working with volunteers understand they have a duty of care to monitor and evaluate volunteers' health and wellbeing throughout the placement. (Essential)
- 3) Volunteers, staff and partners are made aware of who they can speak to within the organisation about specific physical or mental health concerns. (Essential)
- 4) Our organisation has identified a named person or persons to provide ongoing support to partners and staff on safety and security, safeguarding, health, volunteer engagement and volunteer management. (Advanced)
- 5) Our organisation has appointed a designated, trained staff member to recognise and provide first aid, including medical and mental health support, and who can signpost volunteers to appropriate service providers. (Advanced)
- 6) Our organisation ensures relevant staff are trained in the importance of reducing stigma associated with physical and mental health, including disabilities, and staff are trained to handle concerns about a volunteer's physical or mental health. (Excellence)

### 6.3 Health and wellbeing of host communities

Organisations minimise any potential negative impacts of their work on the health and wellbeing of host communities.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1) How do we consider the impact of volunteers on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of local community members and partners? (Advanced)
- 2) When carrying out monitoring and evaluation, do we include assessment of the impact of the volunteer placement on the physical and mental health of partner organisations and local communities? (Advanced)
- 3) How are volunteers made aware of the impact of working with disadvantaged communities, or diverse or vulnerable clients, and do they understand the core concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

- 1) Our organisation's risk assessment and monitoring and evaluation procedures consider the impact of volunteers on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of partner organisations and the local community. (Essential)
- 2) Our volunteers understand our organisation's stance on discrimination and receive pre-placement training or a written briefing on the core concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion, including working with disadvantaged communities, or diverse or vulnerable clients. (Excellence)



# Theme 3

## Managing Volunteer Placements

Managing volunteer placements involves creating a clear framework that aligns organisational goals with volunteer contributions and partner organisations' needs. This begins with well-defined roles and inclusive recruitment processes, followed by thorough preparation and training.

Good management means regularly checking in, making changes based on feedback and offering strong support for both personal and professional development. This approach helps to foster a meaningful, effective volunteer experience that supports both the organisation's aims and the community's needs.



● Area 7

# Recruitment and selection

This area focuses on the strategic processes of volunteer recruitment, role definition and selection, ensuring these steps align with the organisation’s goals and community’s needs.

It emphasises the importance of clearly defined volunteer roles, engaging stakeholders to ensure these roles are relevant to them and using inclusive recruitment practices. Recruitment and selection are not just administrative steps—they are a key part of creating meaningful, impactful volunteer placements.

Organisations must balance their own goals with volunteers’ expectations and partner needs, helping volunteers understand both the contribution they can make and the limits of their role. this section also emphasises the need to regularly review and adapt recruitment and selection processes to stay inclusive, non-discriminatory and relevant in a changing world.

## TOPIC

### 7.1 Describing the role of the volunteer

Organisations should have a clear, documented process to develop role descriptions, and stakeholders must be consulted to ensure the role meets the needs of volunteers, the organisation and the community.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>1a) Do we have a standard procedure to develop role descriptions for volunteer placements? If so, what does it contain? (Essential)</div> <div>1b) How do we translate the needs of each placement into a role description for the volunteer? (Essential)</div> <div>2) How do we ensure all relevant stakeholders are consulted in defining the volunteer’s role description? (Advanced)</div> <div>3) How do we determine the skills and experience required for volunteer roles? (Advanced)</div> | <div>1) Our volunteer role descriptions are based on the needs and demands of the partner organisation and host community. (Essential)</div> <div>2) All relevant stakeholders are consulted to identify the volunteer skills and experience required by the placement. (Advanced)</div> <div>3a) Our organisation follows a standard procedure for developing role descriptions for each volunteer placement. (Advanced).</div> <div>3b) For each placement, the role description is developed according to an agreed-upon standard procedure, and our organisation documents the process in each case to demonstrate it has been followed. (Excellence)</div> <div>3c) This standard procedure is reviewed on a regular basis. (Excellence)</div> |

## 7.2 Recruiting volunteers

Recruitment should be based on clear demands and follow non-discriminatory and inclusive practices, reflecting a true picture of volunteering. Volunteers must understand the placement’s primary aim and the realistic impact of their work.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1a) What are our priorities when it comes to recruiting a volunteer? (Essential)
- 1b) Do we have standard procedures to follow in recruiting volunteers? What do they involve? (Essential)
- 2) How do we ensure candidates get a realistic depiction of the volunteer experience they can expect with our organisation? (Advanced)
- 3) How do we ensure our recruitment process is inclusive and non-discriminatory? What strategies are in place to encourage applications from underrepresented groups? (Essential)
- 4) How do we make sure our volunteers understand the primary aim of their placement is meeting the needs defined in the placement planning? (Essential)
- 5) How do we inform volunteers about the financial conditions (for example, insurance, transport costs and housing)? (Essential)
- 6) How do make sure volunteers do not overestimate their own potential impact? (Advanced)

### INDICATORS

- 1) Our organisation ensures volunteer recruitment campaigns offer a realistic depiction of the volunteer experience and do not reinforce stereotypes. (Advanced)
- 2a) Our organisation’s recruitment process is non-discriminatory and inclusive. (Essential)
- 2b) Our organisation develops and implements strategies to encourage applications from underrepresented groups. (Advanced)
- 3) Volunteers are informed the primary aim of their placement is to meet the needs defined in the role description, and maintain a positive but realistic understanding of the potential and limitations of their role. (Essential)
- 4) Volunteers are made aware of all relevant financial terms and conditions (for example, potential remuneration, insurance, transport costs, housing, etc.) for their placement. (Essential)

## TOPIC

### 7.3 Selecting and matching volunteers

There should be clear procedures for evaluating and selecting volunteers and ensuring all relevant stakeholders are involved in the selection process.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1a) Do we have standard procedures to follow when selecting volunteers? What do they involve? (Essential)
- 1b) What methods do we use to evaluate volunteers' soft skills, technical skills and cultural understanding? (Essential)
- 1c) How do we ensure volunteers are matched to the right placement? (Essential)
- 2) How do we ensure all relevant stakeholders are involved in volunteer selection? How well do we include partner organisations in selection and matching?(Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

- 1a) Our organisation has clearly defined and standardised procedures for volunteer selection, and all recruitment and selection methods are carried out based on the role description. (Essential)
- 1b) Selection methods like screening and interviewing are used to evaluate candidates' technical skills, soft skills, motivations, cultural understanding and overall suitability for a volunteer role. (Essential)
- 1c) Procedures are in place to ensure volunteers are accurately matched to a suitable placement. (Essential)
- 2) All relevant stakeholders are involved in the selection process. (Essential)



## ● Area 8

# Preparation, training and learning

This area focuses on what makes a volunteer placement successful, starting with good preparation, training and mutual understanding. It highlights the need for a clear structure where volunteers and partner organisations understand their roles, objectives and expectations.

This is not just about sharing information and skills—it also means creating space for ongoing learning, reflection and adaptation. These processes help ensure volunteer contributions are aligned with organisational goals, supporting a relationship that grows through feedback and continuous improvement.

The area also emphasises the importance of shared understanding, cultural sensitivity and being responsive to changing needs.

## TOPIC

### 8.1 Informing the volunteers

Volunteers should be thoroughly informed about the placement's objectives and how their involvement benefits the organisation. They should also be familiar with relevant policies (and have access to relevant documentation) and agree to adhere to them throughout their involvement.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1) Which kind of information do volunteers need before they start their placement? How do we inform them? (Essential)
- 2) What information do we share to make sure volunteers are effectively inducted into the placement? (Advanced)
- 3a) What kind of policies and procedures related to the volunteer placement do we have in place, and how do we ensure volunteers are familiar with them? (Advanced)
- 3b) How do we make sure volunteers take them seriously? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

- 1) At the start of the placement, our organisation makes sure volunteers are well-informed about their placement objectives, the wider project or programme and how their involvement contributes to them. (Essential)
- 2) Volunteers are introduced to the wider organisation—its objectives, values, and how the project contributes to the overall mission and vision of both the organisation and its partners. (Advanced)
- 3a) All volunteers are familiarised with the relevant policies and procedures relating to the placement. (Essential)
- 3b) Copies of these policy and procedure documents are available for the volunteers throughout the placement. (Advanced)
- 3c) Volunteers sign and agree to follow these policies throughout the duration of their involvement with the organisation. (Advanced)

## 8.2 Orienting and training volunteers

Orientation and pre-placement training should cover the organisation's values, programmes and cultural sensitivities. Training materials must be up to date, accessible and engaging.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1) How do we orient and train our volunteers for their placement? What key elements should be included in pre-placement training to give volunteers a clear understanding of their roles and the organisation's overall mission? How do we define volunteers' learning objectives? Which training methods do we use, and how do we choose them? (Essential)

2) How do we make sure the orientation sessions and pre-placement training are relevant, engaging and informative for the volunteers? (Advanced)

3) How do we ensure volunteers are given sufficient time for orientation and training? (Essential)

4) How do we inform volunteers of social or cultural sensitivities they should be aware of for their placement? (Essential)

5a) How do we ensure volunteers clearly understand the inherent challenges of volunteering in development, potential colonial legacies and the interconnectedness of development issues like climate change, education, health and poverty? (Advanced)

5b) How do we ensure volunteers understand how their work contributes to broader global, regional and national development frameworks? (Advanced)

6a) How do we ensure all training and learning materials, both pre-placement and in-placement, are up to date, free, accessible and relevant? (Essential)

6b) How do we ensure training and learning materials are engaging for a diverse range of volunteers with different learning styles? (Advanced)

7) How do we evaluate our training programmes, and what action do we take based on the evaluation? (Advanced)

8) How do we draw on lessons from past volunteers' training to improve training for incoming volunteers? (Excellence)

### INDICATORS

1) Our organisation has a plan for pre-placement training and orientation, which contains learning objectives, methods and a training schedule. (Essential)

2) Our organisation offers comprehensive pre-placement training, covering topics like placement history and background. It considers the organisation's mission, vision and core values and offers a detailed overview of programmes. (Essential)

3) Volunteers are granted sufficient time for orientation and training. Orientation and training time is considered part of the volunteer placement, not an added extra. (Essential)

4) Volunteers are made aware of social or cultural sensitivities they should bear in mind for the placement. (Essential)

5a) Volunteers clearly understand the inherent challenges of volunteering in development, possible colonial legacies and the interconnectedness of development issues like climate change, education, health and poverty. (Advanced)

5b) Volunteers are supported to understand how their work contributes to broader global, regional and national development frameworks. (Advanced)

6a) All training and learning materials, both pre-placement and in-placement, are up to date, free, accessible and relevant. (Essential)

6b) Training and learning materials are engaging for a diverse range of volunteers with different learning styles. (Advanced)

7) Our organisation regularly evaluates and improves its volunteer training programmes. (Advanced)

8) Our organisation encourages volunteers to speak to past volunteers from the same or similar placements and provides their contact details. (Excellence)

## TOPIC

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### 8.3 Informing partners

Partners must understand the capabilities and likely impact of volunteers, and be aware of any relevant social or cultural considerations.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1) How do we make sure partners gain a full and realistic understanding of the capabilities and likely impact of a volunteer's involvement? (Essential)
- 2) How do we make partners aware of the social or cultural sensitivities they should bear in mind when engaging a volunteer? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1) Our partner organisations clearly understand the capabilities and likely impact of the volunteer's involvement. (Essential)
- 2) Partner organisations are made aware of social or cultural sensitivities they should bear in mind when engaging a volunteer who may have a different cultural background to their own. (Advanced)

## TOPIC

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### 8.4 Managing volunteers' and partners' expectations

Both volunteers and partners should develop and agree on realistic expectations before the placement begins.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1) How do we manage volunteer and partner expectations regarding the role, what the volunteer can achieve, how they will be supported, as well as ways of working, behaviours and attitudes? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1a) Before any placement begins, volunteers and partners develop agreed-upon expectations regarding the placement. (Essential)
- 1b) Our organisation facilitates an agreement of realistic mutual expectations between volunteers and partners regarding the placement, which includes partners' expectations of the volunteer's behaviours and attitudes. (Essential)

● Area 9

# Managing delivery

This area focuses on ensuring smooth coordination and alignment among all of the people and organisations involved in a volunteer placement. It places strong emphasis on adaptability and ongoing improvement.

All stakeholders are expected to stay focused on shared outcomes, while placement progress is tracked regularly through evaluations and feedback systems that support continuous adjustment. This flexible approach helps refine activities and assess volunteer contributions effectively.

Providing the right resources is essential, ensuring volunteers have the tools and support they need to meet expectations. Everyone involved must stay responsive to changing needs and feedback from community members.

## TOPIC

### 9.1 Monitoring the placement

All stakeholders must be aware of desired outcomes. Regular evaluations should assess progress and volunteer contributions and gather beneficiary feedback.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1) How do we ensure everyone involved in the placement is aware of the desired outcomes, and works together to achieve them? (Essential)</p> <p>2a) Do we regularly evaluate each ongoing placement to monitor progress and provide feedback? Does this include monitoring the contribution(s) the volunteer is making? (Advanced)</p> <p>2b) How do we ensure partners and host communities can provide feedback on the placement and the volunteer's impact? (Advanced)</p> <p>3) What steps do we take if we feel the placement needs to be terminated prematurely? (Advanced)</p> | <p>1) All parties involved in the placement, including partner organisations and their staff, as well as volunteers, are fully aware of the placement's intended outcomes. (Essential)</p> <p>2a) The ongoing placement is regularly evaluated to assess progress and provide feedback to improve delivery. (Advanced)</p> <p>2b) The volunteers' contribution to the progress of the placement is regularly assessed. (Advanced)</p> <p>2c) All relevant stakeholders have the chance to provide feedback on the volunteers' placements and impact. (Advanced)</p> <p>3) Organisations develop and apply criteria to assess if a placement needs to be terminated prematurely. (Advanced)</p> |

## TOPIC

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### 9.2 Adapting the placement

Placements should be designed to adapt and improve based on evaluation results and feedback.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1) Are our volunteer placements designed to be adaptive, allowing for continuous improvement based on feedback and evaluation results? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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1) Each placement is designed to be adaptive, allowing for continuous learning and improvement based on feedback and evaluation results. (Excellence)

## TOPIC

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### 9.3 Providing resources

Volunteers must have access to necessary resources, and regular assessments of resource needs should be conducted.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1a) How do we ensure volunteers have access to the resources, tools and support they need to perform their tasks effectively? (Essential)

1b) Do we conduct regular assessments of these needs and adjust as required? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

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1a) Our organisation ensures volunteers have access to the resources, tools and support they need to perform their tasks effectively. (Essential)

1b) We carry out regular assessments of resource needs and make adjustments as required. (Advanced)

● Area 10

# Providing volunteer support

This area focuses on building a support system that encourages reflection, personal growth and alignment with organisational goals. Volunteers should have opportunities to regularly assess their roles and experiences, promoting ongoing learning and development.

Support goes beyond logistical needs. It includes emotional and professional guidance to help volunteers feel prepared and connected to the organisation’s mission. Formal grievance mechanisms are also important, as they promote transparency, support institutional learning and help ensure volunteer experiences are improved through regular feedback.

TOPIC

10.1 Allowing for exchange and reflection

Time and tools for reflection are provided, and outcomes are assessed, documented and followed up.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>GUIDING QUESTIONS</div> <div>1a) Do we provide time and tools for volunteers, community members and relevant staff to reflect on the placement, their activities and their roles? (Excellence)</div> <div>1b) How can we ensure we act on this reflection? (Advanced)</div> <div>1c) How are the results of the reflection, including any potential actions, documented? (Excellence)</div> | <div>INDICATORS</div> <div>1a) Our organisation provides time and tools for volunteers, community members and relevant staff to reflect on the placement, their activities and their roles. (Essential)</div> <div>1b) We assess whether actions are needed as a result of this reflection. (Advanced)</div> <div>1c) The results of this reflection, including potential actions, are documented and their implementation is tracked. (Excellence)</div> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## TOPIC

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### 10.2 Providing personal support

Personal support is provided, and a trusted person is available for concerns.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1a) How do we respond to volunteers' needs regarding their personal wellbeing? (Essential)
- 1b) Have we identified a trusted person for volunteers to speak to about specific concerns they may have? How do we make sure that person is available when needed? (Advanced)
- 1c) How do we follow up when this happens? (Advanced)
- 2) How do we acknowledge the contributions of volunteers and support their ongoing learning and improvement? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1a) Our organisation provides support in response to volunteers' personal wellbeing needs. (Essential)
- 1b) We identified a trusted person to whom each volunteer can speak about concerns related to their personal wellbeing. (Advanced)
- 1c) If needed, personal support plans are developed with volunteers. (Advanced)
- 2) Staff provide regular feedback to volunteers, acknowledging their contributions and supporting ongoing learning and improvement. (Advanced)

## TOPIC

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### 10.3 Providing professional support

Professional support regarding the volunteer's placement is provided if needed.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1a) How do we know if, during a placement, professional development or training is needed to help a volunteer succeed in their role? (Essential)
- 1b) Can we provide this support if it is needed? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1a) During each placement, there is ongoing assessment of whether the volunteer's skills match their tasks and responsibilities. (Essential)
- 1b) Where necessary, professional support or training is provided to help volunteers fulfil their role as effectively as possible. (Advanced)

### 10.4. Managing grievances

Volunteers are informed of grievance channels. Grievance processes are transparent, monitored and improved.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1a) How do we make sure volunteers are aware of the channels available for investigating and responding to grievances? (Advanced)
- 1b) What processes are in place to handle grievances effectively and transparently? (Advanced)
- 1c) Do we monitor and improve our grievance handling procedures? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

- 1a) Volunteers are made aware of channels for investigating and responding to grievances. (Essential)
- 1b) Grievances are handled effectively and transparently. (Advanced)
- 1c) Grievance handling procedures are monitored regularly. (Excellence)



# Theme 4

## Debriefing and Evaluation

This theme focuses on how organisations learn from volunteer experiences and improve future programmes. It includes proper debriefing, recognising the contributions made by volunteers and others, measuring impact and staying engaged with volunteers after their placements.

In addition to providing a safe space for volunteers to reflect on their experiences, debriefing can also gather honest feedback that can be used to strengthen future planning and delivery. Volunteers should be acknowledged for their contributions and supported in taking their next steps.

Impact measurement must show how volunteer activities contribute to project goals. It should include input from partner organisations and community members and use tools appropriate to the local context. Reporting should be clear, based on outcomes agreed with the partner organisation and grounded in global, regional and national development frameworks.



● Area 11

# Debriefing, recognition and ongoing engagement for the volunteer

This area focuses on the post-volunteer experience, covering the processes that support volunteers, communities and partner organisations after a placement ends.

Organisations should have clear debriefing processes, recognise volunteer contributions and provide ongoing support. These steps help maintain the placement's impact and support volunteers' personal growth.

This area also looks at how volunteer experiences contribute to an organisation's learning and continuous improvement.

## TOPIC

### 11.1 Review and exit

Organisations provide structured and reflective processes for all stakeholders to assess their experiences and impact, ensuring lessons learned are documented and integrated into future projects.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>1a) Do we have clear exit strategies for our projects and volunteer placements? (Essential)</div> <div>1b) What criteria do we use to determine when a project or volunteer placement is ready to end? (Essential)</div> <div>1c) How do we ensure the exit strategy is communicated and understood by all stakeholders involved? (Essential)</div> <div>2a) What time and tools do we provide for volunteers, community members and staff to reflect on the placement? (Essential)</div> <div>2b) How do we facilitate the analysis of the placement's impact? (Essential)</div> <div>2c) What processes do we use to track and document these impacts? (Essential)</div> <div>2d) How do we use this information to improve future placements and projects? (Essential)</div> | <div>1) Our organisation develops and documents a clear exit strategy for each volunteer placement. (Essential)</div> <div>2a) Our organisation provides time and tools for volunteers, staff, partners and community members to reflect upon each placement and assess its impact. (Essential)</div> <div>2b) Volunteers and partners assess and document how each placement impacts on the volunteer's personal and professional development. (Essential)</div> |

### 11.2 Debriefing of placement and community

Placements and communities are given opportunities to reflect on the impact of the work and share their perspectives. This calls for transparent communication of findings and the active inclusion of community feedback in shaping future volunteer projects.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1a) Do we provide the partner and host community with clear and comprehensive evidence and learning from each volunteer placement? (Essential)

1b) What methods do we use to communicate this information? Are they appropriate? (Essential)

1c) How do we involve the partner and host community in discussions about this evidence and learning? (Essential)

1d) What steps do we take to incorporate the community's feedback and insights into future volunteer placements and projects? (Essential)

#### INDICATORS

1) Through the partner organisation, relevant members of the community that were supported by a volunteer are actively involved in discussions about the impact of each volunteer placement. Evidence and learning from the placement are shared with them. (Essential)

2) Feedback and insights from relevant community members are incorporated into the development of future volunteer placements and projects. (Essential)



## 11.3 Debriefing of organisations and partners

Systems are in place to document and share the learning gathered from volunteer placements with both internal and external stakeholders. This emphasizes the importance of using feedback from debriefings to inform organisational practices and drive continuous improvement.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1a) What processes do we have in place to document the learning gathered by volunteers during and following their placements? (Essential)

1b) How do we ensure all relevant insights and experiences are captured, documented and shared in ways that can be effectively used by both partners and our organisation? (Essential)

2a) How do we communicate evaluation findings, including both successes and challenges, to internal and external stakeholders? (Advanced)

2b) What methods do we use to ensure our evaluation findings are accessible and understandable to all stakeholders? (Advanced)

2c) How do we encourage and facilitate feedback from stakeholders on the evaluation findings? (Advanced)

3a) How do we incorporate feedback from volunteer debriefings into our monitoring system? (Excellence)

3b) What internal communications plans are in place to ensure this feedback informs and reviews our organisational practices? (Excellence)

3c) How do we evaluate the effectiveness of our internal communications in disseminating debriefing feedback and driving organisational improvements? (Excellence)

### INDICATORS

1) Our partner organisations have processes in place to document learning from each volunteer placement. (Essential)

2) Our organisation shares evaluation findings—both successes and challenges—with all relevant stakeholders, including partner organisations and other stakeholders in the host community. (Advanced)

3) Our monitoring, evaluation and learning system includes a clear and active internal communications plan to ensure volunteer feedback will inform organisational practices. (Excellence)

### 11.4 Debriefing of volunteers

Volunteers have access to confidential and supportive spaces to reflect on their experiences and feel comfortable and valued, contributing to their personal and professional development.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1) Do we ensure volunteers have access to a safe, confidential space to reflect on their experiences, and how do we maintain the privacy of personal insights? (Essential)

2a) How effectively do we use trained debriefers to facilitate volunteer debriefings? (Essential)

2b) Do we ensure volunteers feel comfortable sharing their experiences without fear of organisational repercussions? (Advanced)

3) How do we ensure our debriefers are adequately trained to escalate concerns related to the abuse of children or vulnerable adults, and feedback the volunteer wants shared with our organisation, while maintaining confidentiality on other personal reflections? (Excellence)

4a) What standards or guidelines do we use to ensure consistency and effectiveness in our debriefings? (Essential)

4b) How do we assess the quality and impact of our debriefing processes? (Advanced)

4c) How do we ensure volunteers are informed about debriefing arrangements? (Advanced)

4d) How do we inform volunteers about how concerns raised during debriefing will be handled? (Advanced)

4e) What procedures do we follow to address and resolve concerns raised by volunteers? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

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1) Our organisation provides a safe, confidential debriefing service for volunteers to reflect on their experiences, ensuring feedback remains private unless it involves safeguarding concerns or if the volunteer asks for it to be shared with the wider organisation. (Essential)

2) Our organisation uses debriefers trained in a recognised methodology. Volunteers can request a debriefer from outside the organisation, ensuring they feel comfortable sharing their experiences without fear of organisational repercussions. (Advanced)

3) Our organisation ensures debriefers are trained to escalate any concerns regarding the abuse of children or vulnerable adults while maintaining confidentiality on all other personal reflections shared during debriefings. (Advanced)

4) Our debriefers are trained to signpost volunteers to professional support where necessary. (Advanced)

### 11.5 Recognising volunteers

Organisations establish transparent and meaningful recognition processes to acknowledge volunteers' contributions.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1a) How do we acknowledge and celebrate our volunteers during and after their placements? (Essential)

1b) How do we ensure this recognition is transparent, consistently applied and agreed upon by all stakeholders? (Essential)

1c) What recognition tools do we use, and how suitable are they in acknowledging the contributions of our volunteers? (Essential)

2a) Do we maintain records of volunteer personal development and performance achievements? How do we ensure these records are accurate and comprehensive? (Advanced)

2b) How do we use these records to validate formal recognition of achievements, such as in employer references? (Advanced)

3a) How do we ensure our expressions of appreciation are meaningful and appreciated by the volunteers? (Excellence)

3b) Do we gather feedback from volunteers to improve our appreciation and recognition practices? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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1) Our organisation has processes in place to ensure the contribution of all volunteers is properly recognised during and at the end of their placement. (Essential)

2) Our organisation keeps sufficient records of volunteer personal development and performance achievements to validate any formal recognition (for example, in employer references). (Advanced)

### 11.6 Managing resettlement

Volunteers have access to formal and informal support systems that help them transition back into their personal and professional lives after long-term placements. This calls for tailored resettlement strategies that address their emotional, social and career needs, ensuring a smooth reintegration and continued personal growth.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1a) What formal and informal resettlement support do we provide to volunteers who have carried out long-term placements? (Essential)

1b) How do we assess the needs of returning volunteers to tailor our resettlement support effectively? (Essential)

2) Do we facilitate peer support among current and former volunteers? What platforms or methods do we use? (Advanced)

3a) What guidance do we offer to assist volunteers with social reintegration after their placements? (Excellence)

3b) How do we support volunteers on their next steps in education, training, employment or retirement? (Excellence)

3c) How do we assess the effectiveness of these supports? (Excellence)

3d) How do we gather feedback from volunteers on the usefulness of the guidance provided for their social reintegration and career transitions? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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1) Our organisation provides volunteers returning from long-term placements to their home community with formal and informal resettlement support. (Essential)

2) We facilitate peer support from current and former volunteers. (Advanced)

3) Our organisation provides volunteers with guidance to assist in their social reintegration and entry into education, training, employment or retirement. (Excellence)

## 11.7 Providing ongoing support

Organisations facilitate continuous engagement with volunteers after their placements, creating lasting connections that enable volunteers to remain involved and contribute to long-term development goals

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1a) How do we identify and facilitate connections for volunteers with relevant societies and organisations focused on development cooperation or issues related to their volunteer service? (Essential)

1b) What processes are in place to ensure these connections are beneficial for both the volunteers and the organisations? (Essential)

2a) How do we support volunteers in connecting with local organisations focused on volunteering, and relevant alumni networks? (Advanced)

2b) What methods do we use to maintain and strengthen these alumni networks? (Advanced)

3a) What opportunities do we provide for volunteers to re-volunteer, including shorter-term or online forms of volunteering? (Excellence)

3b) How do we ensure these opportunities are meaningful and aligned with the volunteers' skills and interests? (Excellence)

4) Do we facilitate connections between current, outgoing and future volunteers? (Excellence)

5a) What mechanisms are in place to facilitate knowledge-sharing between volunteers and with external audiences? (Excellence)

5b) How do we encourage volunteers to share their experiences and insights with the broader community and relevant stakeholders? (Excellence)

5c) What processes evaluate the impact of knowledge sharing on both volunteers and external audiences? (Excellence)

6a) How do we ensure volunteers feel confident and prepared to share their experiences in various settings? (Advanced)

6b) What guidance do we provide to volunteers on presenting and discussing their experiences? (Advanced)

### INDICATORS

1) Our organisation provides opportunities for volunteers to connect to societies and organisations focused on development cooperation or issues related to their volunteer service. (Essential)

2) We provide opportunities for volunteers to connect with networks focused on volunteering, including any volunteer alumni networks. (Advanced)

3) We actively promote and facilitate e-volunteering or re-volunteering by alumni. (Excellence)

4) Our organisation facilitates connections with outgoing or future volunteers to share insights and advice. (Excellence)

5) We facilitate knowledge-sharing between volunteers and with external audiences. (Excellence)

## ● Area 12

# Measuring impact

This area focuses on understanding and evaluating the effectiveness and outcomes of volunteer placements within the wider context of projects, partner organisations, communities and the volunteer themselves.

Organisations should have clear frameworks to show how volunteer activities contribute to project and programme goals, aligned to global, regional and national development frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals. Strong planning, data collection and measurement processes are essential. These should involve key stakeholders to ensure impact is assessed accurately and used to support continuous improvement.

## TOPIC

### 12.1 Relationship between volunteer placement and project

Organisations clearly define how volunteer activities contribute to overall project goals and ensure this relationship is communicated to all stakeholders. This calls for explicit alignment between volunteer efforts and broader development aims, ensuring measurable impact.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1) Have we clearly defined the relationship between each volunteer placement and the overall project or programme? (Essential)</p> <p>2) How do we measure and communicate how volunteer activities contribute to the overall project goals, and ensure all stakeholders are informed? (Advanced)</p> | <p>1) Our organisation clearly defines the relationship between volunteer placements and the overall project or programme, and understands how volunteer activities contribute to the overall project goals. (Essential)</p> <p>2) Our organisation identifies, during the design, implementation and measurement processes, the specific value added by volunteers in relation to global, regional and national development frameworks. (Advanced)</p> <p>3) We ensure volunteers' specific contributions are clearly identified in the planning and implementation framework for projects that include multiple interventions. (Excellence)</p> |

### 12.2 Planning framework

Organisations establish clear links between volunteer placement goals and the actions required to achieve them, while actively involving the community in defining relevant indicators.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1a) How do we ensure the goals of volunteer placements are broken down into the specific actions needed to achieve them? (Essential)

1b) How do we define and test the assumptions underlying our volunteer placements? (Essential)

1c) How do we identify indicators that accurately reflect the needs and aspirations of the host community and other stakeholders? (Essential)

1d) How do we involve the community and stakeholders in the process of selecting these indicators? (Essential)

2) Do we align our volunteer placement metrics with indicators from relevant global, regional and national development frameworks? (Advanced)

3a) What methods do we use to collect baseline information for volunteer placements? (Excellence)

3b) How do we ensure the baseline information for project inputs, outputs and outcomes is agreed upon with the community and relevant stakeholders? (Excellence)

3c) How do we use this baseline information to measure the progress and impact of our volunteer placements? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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1a) We ensure the goals of each volunteer placement are linked to outcomes, and assumptions are defined and tested. (Essential)

1b) Our organisation defines relevant indicators that reflect the needs and aspirations of the partner organisation, the wider host community and relevant stakeholders within it. (Essential)

2) We collect baseline information on each volunteer placement's inputs, outputs and outcomes, agreed upon by the partner organisation, the wider community and all relevant stakeholders. (Excellence)

### 12.3 Collecting data

Organisations implement inclusive and accurate data collection methods to assess the impact of volunteer placements on the community.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1a) What methods do we use to collect data on the impact of our volunteer placements on the host community? (Essential)

1b) How do we ensure the data collected accurately reflects the impact on the host community? (Essential)

1c) Are our data collection efforts focused on the specific objectives and outcomes of our volunteer placements? (Essential)

1d) What criteria do we use to determine the relevance of the data collected to the placement's objectives? (Essential)

2) Do we meaningfully involve the partners, host community and other relevant stakeholders in our data and information collection processes? (Advanced)

3) What training programmes are in place for staff, volunteers, consultants and host community members involved in data collection? (Excellence)

4a) Do we use qualitative and participatory research methods to collect the views and opinions of the community and stakeholders? (Excellence)

4b) How do we ensure our research processes are inclusive and capture diverse perspectives from the host community and other stakeholders? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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1) Our organisation collects data on the impact of the volunteer placements for the partner organisation and the wider community, focusing on objectives and outcomes. (Essential)

2) The partner organisation, wider community and other relevant stakeholders participate in the data collection and information collection processes. (Advanced)

3) We ensure high-quality training is provided to those collecting data. This includes staff, volunteers, consultants and community members. (Excellence)

4) The views and opinions of the community and relevant stakeholders are collected using qualitative and participatory research processes. (Excellence)

5) Partner organisations co-design the methodology for data collection. (Excellence)

## 12.4 Measurement processes and tools for local context

Measurement tools are accessible and understandable for all community members, while prioritising data security and ethical considerations.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1a) How do we ensure our measurement processes and tools are simple and easy to understand for all stakeholders? (Essential)

1b) What feedback mechanisms are in place to assess and improve the clarity of our measurement tools? (Essential)

2a) What measures do we take to identify and mitigate any potential harm that might arise from our measurement activities? (Essential)

2b) What policies and procedures are in place to ensure the privacy, confidentiality and security of the data collected? (Essential)

2c) Do we regularly review and update our data protection measures to address new risks and challenges? (Essential)

3a) How do we determine the appropriate measurement tools for different communities? (Essential)

3b) What steps do we take to ensure our tools are effectively adapted to the needs of illiterate or differently abled community members? (Advanced)

3c) How do we incorporate the “do no harm” approach into our impact measurement processes? (Advanced)

4) Do we ensure measurement tools are accurately translated into local languages? (Excellence)

### INDICATORS

1) Our organisation’s measurement processes and tools are simple and can be understood by partner organisations, community members, relevant stakeholders and volunteers. (Essential)

2) Our impact measurement processes follow a “do no harm” approach. We ensure privacy, confidentiality and security of data. (Essential)

3) Our organisation uses appropriate tools for vulnerable communities (for example, visual tools for communities with low levels of literacy). (Advanced)

4) Measurement tools are translated into local languages. (Excellence)

### 12.5 Measuring impact of the project on volunteers

Organisations track the personal and professional development of volunteers throughout their placements, using this information to improve future volunteer experiences and programme outcomes.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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1a) What methods do we use to track the impact of volunteering activities on individual volunteers? (Advanced)

1b) How do we assess and measure the personal and professional growth of volunteers as a result of their placements? (Advanced)

1c) How do we use this information to improve the volunteer experience and better support their development? (Advanced)

2a) What processes are in place to track, evaluate and document our volunteers' learning experiences? (Excellence)

2b) What feedback mechanisms do we provide for volunteers to share their learning experiences and suggestions for improvement? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

---

1) Our organisation tracks the impact of volunteering activities on individual volunteers in terms of their personal and professional development. (Advanced)

2) We track and document our volunteers' learning journeys. (Excellence)

# Reporting and learning

This area highlights the importance of transparent, accessible and meaningful reporting to all stakeholders, including communities and the wider development sector.

Organisations should collect feedback from communities and partners, apply lessons learned to future work and share insights across the volunteering sector. These actions help to strengthen accountability, improve practice and support shared learning.

## TOPIC

### 13.1 Reporting and feedback

Organisations ensure reports are clear, accessible and regularly shared with all stakeholders, ensuring transparent reporting that highlights the impact of volunteer activities and their contribution to broader development goals.

| GUIDING QUESTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | INDICATORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1a) How frequently do we share reports with partners, host communities and other relevant stakeholders? (Essential)</p> <p>1b) How do we ensure our reports are in an appropriate language and format for all stakeholders? (Essential)</p> <p>1c) How do we verify our reports are understood and accessible to the communities and stakeholders? (Essential)</p> <p>2a) What methods do we use to highlight the specific contributions of volunteers in achieving these goals? (Advanced)</p> <p>2b) What processes do we follow to report our contributions toward global, regional and national development frameworks to national governments? (Advanced)</p> <p>3) How do we ensure our reports accurately capture the contributions of our volunteers and projects? (Advanced)</p> <p>4a) How do we incorporate a “do no harm” approach in our reporting practices? (Excellence)</p> <p>4b) How do we address and mitigate any potential risks that might arise from our reporting activities? (Excellence)</p> | <p>1) Our organisation reports to partner organisations, communities and other relevant stakeholders on a regular basis, using appropriate language and formats. (Essential)</p> <p>2) We share our work with national governments to ensure our volunteers’ contributions toward global, regional and national development frameworks are captured. (Advanced)</p> <p>3) Our organisation uses a “do no harm” approach in reporting to governments, donors and other stakeholders, and we ensure the rights of partner organisations, communities and other stakeholders are respected. (Excellence)</p> <p>4) Outcome and impact reports are shared openly with partners and donors, including on our website. (Excellence)</p> |

## TOPIC

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### 13.2 Involving the community

Communities are actively engaged in evaluating the results of volunteer placements through participatory methods, allowing community members to provide feedback that informs future project planning.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1a) Do we facilitate participatory workshops with host communities to gather their perceptions on the results of the volunteer placements? (Excellence)
- 1b) What methods ensure all community members, including marginalised groups, can participate and share their views in these workshops? (Excellence)
- 1c) How do we integrate the feedback from these workshops into our project evaluations and future planning? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1) Feedback from partner organisations/communities is used to inform and improve our ways of working and future programmes. (Essential)
- 2) Participatory workshops are held with partner organisations/host communities to collect their perception about the results of each volunteer placement. (Excellence)

## TOPIC

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### 13.3 Planning

Organisations use the insights from evaluations and impact measurements to shape the design of future volunteer projects.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

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- 1a) How do we use the results of our evaluations and impact measurements to inform the design of future volunteer projects and placements? (Advanced)
- 1b) What processes are in place to ensure lessons learned from past placements are incorporated into new volunteer project designs? (Advanced)
- 1c) How do we ensure our impact measurements reflect host communities' long-term goals and needs? (Advanced)

#### INDICATORS

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- 1) Our organisation uses evaluation and impact measurement to shape the design of future volunteer projects and placements. (Essential)

## TOPIC

### 13.4 Collaborating with the sector

Organisations share their findings, reports and best practices with the wider volunteering and development sector, contributing to collective knowledge and improving sector-wide practices.

#### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1a) Do we share our results, reports and other documentation with the wider volunteering and development sector? (Excellence)

1b) What platforms or networks do we use to disseminate this information to other organisations and stakeholders? (Excellence)

1c) How do we ensure our shared documentation contributes to the broader understanding and measurement of impact toward global, regional, and national development frameworks? (Excellence)

1d) What feedback mechanisms are in place to learn from others in the sector and improve our practices based on shared knowledge? (Excellence)

#### INDICATORS

1) Our organisation shares results, reports and other documentation with the volunteering and development sectors to improve practice and measure impact toward global, regional and national development frameworks. (Excellence)



# Acknowledgements

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