

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING ORGANISATIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE

Principle 1: (PURPOSE)

Organisations' programmes and placements will be based on achievable objectives, that have been identified by host partners and communities.

Benchmarks:

- SAMPLE
- 1.1 Sending organisations ensure programmes are set up to meet a purpose that has been identified with host partners and communities, rather than to meet demand for volunteer opportunities from the public.
 - 1.2 Organisations undertake consultation processes that involve multiple stakeholders.
 - 1.3 Where there are long-term, ongoing partnerships, sending organisations have regular meetings with partners.
 - 1.4 All financial costs to host partners and communities are assessed and provision is made to fully meet those costs.

Indicators:

- 1.1.1 Organisations can provide an outline of aims, objectives, roles and responsibilities for each placement.
- 1.2.1 Organisation can produce documented consultation process that relates to aims, objectives, roles and responsibilities of each placement.
- 1.3.1 Organisations with long-term partnerships review placement objectives on an ongoing basis through direct meetings with partners, volunteers and other stakeholders.
- 1.4.1 Organisations ensure all financial costs to host partners and communities are covered for the duration of the placement.

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This code has drawn heavily on the Comhlámh Code of Good Practice for Sending Organisations – for more details:
<http://www.volunteeringoptions.org/>

Principle 2: (MARKETING)

Marketing and imagery will be consistent with good practice and will provide clear expressions of organisational aims, ethos and values.

Benchmarks:

- 2.1 Host communities will be portrayed pictorially in a positive manner consistent with good practice, in line with the *European Code of Conduct on Images and Messages relating to the Third World*.
- 2.2 Sending agencies will be clear about their aims, values and ethos, and will ensure volunteers understand and are in agreement with them.
- 2.3 Sending organisations will not make false claims as to the efficacy and effects of their programmes, or the extent to which volunteers can 'make a difference' to the lives of the people in host communities.

Indicators:

- 2.1.1 Marketing and imagery is guided by European Code of Conduct on Images and Messages relating to the Third World.
- 2.2.1 Marketing material accurately reflects organisation's activities and does not exaggerate impact of programmes.

Principle 3: (RECRUITMENT)

Organisations will use fair, consistent and transparent recruitment procedures.

Benchmarks:

- 3.1 Sending organisations will have consistent selection procedures that are made clear to volunteers from the outset.
- 3.2 All sending agencies agree to conduct a full appraisal of volunteers' suitability and their match to the requirements of host partners and communities through an open recruitment, application and interview process.
- 3.3 Organisations will check references in a consistent manner.
- 3.4 When requested, feedback will be provided to those who failed to be selected.

Indicators:

- 3.1.2 Organisations provide applicants with full details of selection process.
- 3.2.1 Organisations can demonstrate that structured interviews take place with every volunteer. Where interviews are not in person the organisation will meet the volunteer in person for pre-departure training and briefing.
- 3.3.1 Organisations receive at least Basic Disclosure checks from every volunteer and, where appropriate, receive Standard or Enhanced Disclosure checks depending on the relevant Government guidelines and the roles in which volunteers will be placed.
- 3.4.1 Organisations provide feedback to rejected applicants on request.

Principle 4: (PRE-PLACEMENT INFORMATION)

Potential volunteers will be provided with clear and accurate information on the sending organisation, their partners, programmes and volunteer placements.

Benchmarks:

- 4.1 Sending organisations will provide potential volunteers with references to independent resources on volunteering overseas. Sources to be made available will include access to case studies or returned volunteers.
- 4.2 Volunteers will be given clear information, including local contact name and address, of the host organisations they will be working with.
- 4.3 Sending organisations will provide as much information as possible to aid potential volunteers in their decision-making and enable them to learn as much as possible about the requirements of the placement.
- 4.4 Organisations provide a full breakdown of the costs associated with the specific placement.

Indicators:

- 4.1.1 Appropriate pre-placement information is provided, including detailed information on country, region, locality, placement and partner contact details. Pre-placement information includes emergency and health & safety information.
- 4.1.2 Organisations provide volunteers with full, one-to-one access to returned volunteers.
- 4.2.1 Organisations provide volunteers with the aims and objectives of the placement, including an outline of the volunteer's specific role in that placement.
- 4.2.2 Organisations encourage and signpost volunteers to further sources and reading.
- 4.3.1 Organisations require volunteers to sign up to minimum standards that are the same or analogous to those expressed within the Volunteer Charter.
- 4.4.1 Where volunteers are required to contribute financially, the organisation can provide any interested party with a precise breakdown of what a volunteer's contribution pays for.

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Principle 5: (PRE-PLACEMENT TRAINING)

Organisations will require all volunteers to participate in appropriate preparation, training and induction.

Benchmarks:

5.1 Volunteers will be provided with a training schedule appropriate to their roles.

Indicators:

5.1.1 Organisations provide compulsory, structured training that is specific to the placement and country, covering, at the least, roles & responsibilities, conduct and cultural awareness. Pre-departure training must be conducted in the UK where volunteers have not been met in person earlier in the recruitment process.

5.1.2 Organisations can document that they evaluate and review their training, making changes where necessary.

Principle 6: (VOLUNTEER SUPPORT)

Organisations will provide ongoing support appropriate to the placement and volunteer.

Benchmarks:

6.1 Sending organisations will provide ongoing, easily accessed support to volunteers. The existence and nature of this support will be made clear to volunteers at the pre-departure stage.

6.2 Support will include the opportunity for volunteers to comment on the quality and progress of their placement.

6.3 Sending organisations will offer debriefing for all returned volunteers, allowing volunteers to reflect on the experience and pass on their views through an extra formal channel.

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Indicators:

- 6.1.1 Organisations provide volunteers with a support contact person or telephone number, and clearly define when this support can be accessed.
- 6.2.1 Organisations provide volunteers with structured opportunities to comment on the quality and progress of their placement, during the placement.
- 6.2.2 Organisations have a process in place for responding to changing and unexpected circumstances.
- 6.3.1 Organisations offer a structured debrief to every volunteer.

Principle 7: (RISK MANAGEMENT)

Organisations will ensure the protection, safety and well being of volunteers and those they work with as far as possible.

Benchmarks:

- 7.1 Sending organisations will conduct risk assessments for all their activities, which take into account and manage risk to volunteers and host partners.
- 7.2 Sending organisations will seek relevant advice from external agencies when assessing and managing risk.

Indicators:

- 7.1.1 Written risk assessments for each placement are available and can be viewed by volunteers pre-departure.
- 7.1.2 Organisations provide volunteers with a 24-hour emergency contact telephone number.
- 7.1.3 Responsibility for insurance is made clear prior to appointment of volunteers, and organisations ensure adequate coverage is in place prior to volunteer departure.
- 7.2.1 Organisations can provide a list of external agencies consulted during risk assessment.

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Principle 8: (MONITORING AND EVALUATION)

Organisations will undertake ongoing monitoring and evaluation in order to improve performance and ensure their work remains relevant.

Benchmarks:

- 8.1 Monitoring and evaluation is an ongoing process throughout the project cycle.
- 8.2 Monitoring and evaluation includes and involves volunteers and host partners.
- 8.3 Monitoring and evaluation will be used by organisations to learn from the work they are doing, to improve their performance, and to ensure the purpose of placements remains relevant to volunteers and host partners.

Indicators:

- 8.1.1 Organisations have a structured process for requesting feedback from both volunteers and host partners, including post-placement feedback.
- 8.2.1 Organisations have a structured process for analysing feedback.
- 8.3.1 Organisations use evaluations to inform and develop their work in order to improve performance and ensure the purpose of placements remain relevant.

VOLUNTEER CHARTER

Principle 1:

Volunteers will inform themselves about all relevant issues relating to their placement.

Benchmarks:

- Volunteers will ensure that they are well prepared for their placement by familiarising themselves with their host country and its peoples and cultures as much as possible before they go. This can be achieved by studying books and other resources, monitoring the news of that country, and meeting people who have lived there or come from there if possible.
- Sending organisations will facilitate this process by providing volunteers with possible sources for their research, some basic facts and by putting potential volunteers in contact with appropriate ex-volunteers.

Principle 2:

Volunteers will familiarise themselves thoroughly with their role description before departure.

Benchmarks:

- Volunteers will learn and understand their role, activities and responsibilities for their placement, ensuring that they are clear on why the work they are doing is necessary.
- Volunteers will ensure they understand how the work they are doing will be developed and how to monitor their work as necessary.
- If relevant, volunteers will make contact with ex-volunteers who have previously worked on that placement.

Principle 3:

Volunteers will respect local customs and will adopt the roles of learner and guest.

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Benchmarks:

- Volunteers will respect local customs and knowledge.
- Volunteers will understand and be aware of their role as learner rather than just 'giver', appreciating that they will learn from their hosts, rather than just their hosts learning from them. Volunteers will appreciate and explore their own motivations for volunteering and endeavour not to be overzealous in their desire to 'give something back', or 'help out' people less fortunate than themselves.

Principle 4:

Volunteers will always act in a professional manner and be flexible and adaptable while in their placement.

Benchmarks:

- Volunteers will undertake their placement with a professional attitude. They will not turn up late, leave early, or behave in a manner more appropriate for a holiday.
- While volunteers will receive role descriptions, they are expected to be flexible and adaptable in what they do while on placement, and in their attitudes to the local community and their colleagues.

Principle 5:

Volunteers will take due care with their personal safety and physical and mental health.

Benchmarks:

- The sending organisation will provide volunteers with guidance on health and safety, and volunteers will abide by that advice and use their common sense. Volunteers are ultimately responsible for their own well-being.
- Volunteers will find out about the local health and security situation as part of their general research on their host country. It is the responsibility of volunteers to ensure they have appropriate insurance cover either through their sending agency or by making

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independent arrangements.

Principle 6:

On their return, volunteers will use their experiences and knowledge to contribute to a more outward looking, globally aware UK.

Benchmarks:

- Volunteers will use the knowledge they gain overseas to raise awareness in the UK on issues affecting the developing world and encourage an outward looking UK.
- Volunteers will use the knowledge they have gained and the social and global awareness they have developed to feed into work (both paid and voluntary) in the UK. Most immediately, this can include being available to advise other potential volunteers.

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