



# Global volunteering trends

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# Who is VSO?

- An international development organisation that works with volunteers to fight poverty and alleviate inequality.
- Programmes in education, health, livelihoods, participation and governance.
- We work with volunteers to share skills, knowledge and experience across borders and within countries.
- We work with local partners to build capacity and ownership over change at a local level.
- Working in 25 countries



# VSO's volunteering interventions in 2015

- Skilled international and national volunteers
- Community based volunteers
- Youth volunteers
- Corporate volunteers
- Political volunteers (pol vol scheme)
- E-volunteering



# Skilled international and national volunteers

- Increase in the number of international volunteers volunteering south to south
- Growing interest in national volunteering schemes
- Governments, academic bodies and employers see a dual opportunity to plug resource gaps and enable volunteers to gain skills and experience
- Risk that volunteering is viewed as a mechanism for plugging long-term gaps in services rather than complementing existing funded services.



# Youth volunteering

- Out of the 2,630 VSO volunteers during 2013/14 1,660 of these were youth volunteers
- International Citizen Service (ICS) scheme – UK Government scheme to provide young people from the UK and developing countries with the opportunity to contribute to specific development projects and gain skills
- Growing phenomenon in countries where a combination of factors have led to high unemployment and an increasingly competitive jobs market
- Specific contribution to sustainable development: building active citizenship within communities, advocating for change at local level, building the capacity of other youth.



# Corporate volunteering

- Corporate partners want to engage more directly in projects and offer opportunities for their employees to volunteer.
- Benefits for the volunteer and corporate; opportunity to learn more about other aspects of their business
- For the individuals working with the volunteers; opportunity to gain access to new business skills and knowledge
- Striking a balance between reaching the poorest and most marginalised and volunteering as a strategic asset



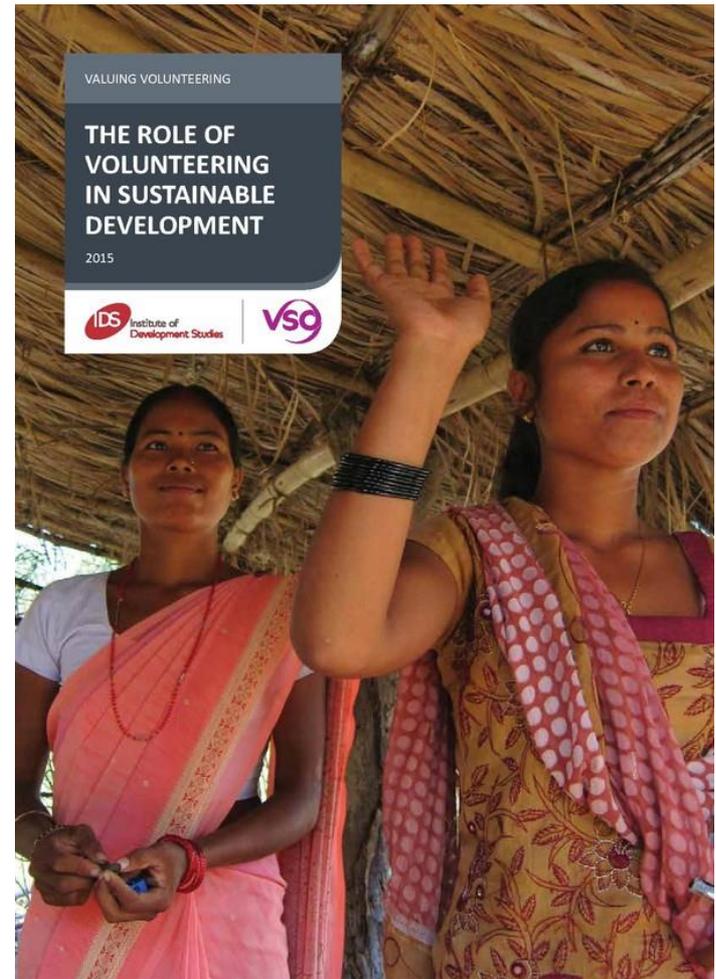
# Community based volunteering

- Extending the reach of services to some of the poorest and most marginalised
- Need support in terms of training, resources and management
- Should be there to complement rather than replace existing services
- Crucial resource in terms of building resilience and sustainability at community level



# Broader development context – Valuing Volunteering research

- Action research project conducted by VSO and the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex
- Research undertaken in Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal and the Philippines over 2 years
- Involved more than 3,700 participants
- Aimed to understand how volunteers work but also what makes volunteering and its contribution to sustainable development unique



# Volunteering as a relational approach

- Relationships are key
- The personal relationships that volunteers developed not only strengthened their understanding of the local context but also enabled them to work as equals within a community and be trusted.
- Relationships were often formed as a result of volunteers spending time living and working within communities,
- They got to know people as friends and meet their families and they were able to understand the volunteer and the challenges they faced.



# Building on the MDGs

- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) benefited the general population but barely reached the most marginalised and the very poor.
- Discriminatory social norms and institutional discrimination, corruption and naked power lead to poor access to services
- Finance and brings about is transactional rather than transformative change, it is not pro-poor
- Technology is only useful when we engage people in the use of technology
- We must focus on how development is done rather than what services are available
- Volunteering has a key role to play



# A post-2015 framework for development

- Calling for a framework that recognises and effectively supports the role that volunteers can play in facilitating people-centred, sustainable development and protects against its misuse
- Growing interest by governments and public bodies in civil society and volunteering has had both a positive and negative
- Risk that volunteers are seen by governments as a way to plug long-term gaps in services
- Leads to volunteers being overburdened
- Power of volunteering is in what it can contribute to development that is different and adds value rather than what it can replace

