

# FORUM DISCUSSION PAPER 2015

## Documenting the Contribution of Volunteering to the SDGs:

The challenges and opportunities  
of universal SDGs for IVCOs  
and volunteer groups

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**1** NO  
POVERTY



**2** ZERO  
HUNGER



**3** GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



**4** QUALITY  
EDUCATION



**6** CLEAN WATER  
AND SANITATION



**5** GENDER  
EQUALITY



**7** AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY



**8** DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH



**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



**10** REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES



**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES



**12** RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



**13** CLIMATE  
ACTION



**14** LIFE  
BELOW WATER



**15** LIFE  
ON LAND



**16** PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS

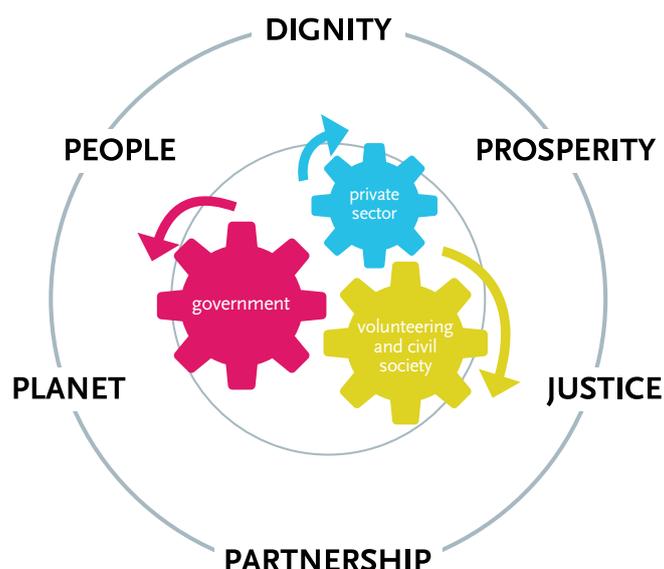


**17** PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



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# Foreword

This is the sixteenth in a series of discussion papers produced by the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum), which follows on from our research work on trends in international volunteering and cooperation in recent years.

This paper discusses options for documenting and showcasing the collective contributions of a diverse community of volunteers to sustainable development, in the context of the adoption by the United Nations of the universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, and highlights the challenges and opportunities this presents for Forum members.

The views expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of Forum or its members, or of the organisations for which the authors work. The responsibility for these views rests with the authors alone.



**Chris Eaton**  
Chair of Forum

## About Forum



The International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum) is the most significant global network of International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations (IVCOs). Forum exists to share information, develop good practice and enhance cooperation across the international volunteering and development sectors. It promotes the value of volunteering for development through policy engagement, mutual learning and by sharing innovative and good practices. Forum is a 'virtual' network, with a global membership that includes a range of organisations involved in international development, including non-government and state organisations.

# Executive Summary

This paper was requested by the Forum Board, which brought together representatives of the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group, the Post-2015 Indicators sub-committee, and the Forum Research Working Group and its chair to manage its development and review. It was requested to discuss options for documenting and showcasing the collective contributions of a diverse community of volunteers to sustainable development, in the context of the adoption by the United Nations of the universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, and will highlight the challenges and opportunities this presents for the international volunteer cooperation organisation (IVCO) members of the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum) specifically.

As with the Millennium Development Goals, the UN's Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (or the 2030 Agenda of global goals for sustainable development, as it is also now being described) will only be achieved with the active engagement of volunteers. Volunteers' close engagement with communities in need, their skills and motivation to contribute to more inclusive, active and cohesive societies, and modeling/facilitation of the reciprocal exchange of knowledge and skills among stakeholders make volunteers distinctive actors in support of the achievement of the SDGs.

While the distinctive role of volunteers has been articulated within development discussions, it has not been widely understood or integrated into the broader development community agenda, though this is gradually changing. In recent years, volunteer groups have worked together to elevate the role of volunteers in the post-2015 discussions, and have achieved significant successes, including the formation of the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group<sup>1</sup> and recognition as a stakeholder in the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), the UN body that follows up and reviews the implementation of sustainable development commitments and, as of 2016, the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs. Despite this progress, volunteerism does not permeate the SDGs' plans and processes at all levels.

For this reason, volunteer groups have raised the idea of pursuing efforts to document the contribution of volunteerism to the SDGs and to use this information to secure a stronger partnership role for volunteer groups in the SDG implementation process. The idea was discussed at a number of workshops over the last few years and was further developed by the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group and the Forum Board, which requested this discussion paper for the IVCO conference. This was timely because in his

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.volunteeractioncounts.org/en/post-mdg/stakeholder-engagement.html>

26 June 2015 report, *Integrating volunteering in the next decade*, the UN Secretary-General recommended that “volunteer-involving organizations should prepare regular reports that demonstrate how volunteerism accompanies the implementation of the sustainable development goals. Inter alia, a combined report could be presented at the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council...” (UNGA, 2015).

Forum requested the paper to give continuity to discussions at recent IVCO conferences and explicitly consider the implications of the SDGs for IVCOs. The authors make the case that better documenting the global contributions of all volunteers to the SDGs will also enhance the policy and resource environment for IVCOs so the decisions made at the IVCO conference can ultimately provide a leadership role to the broader volunteering community (just as IVCO declarations have done since 2012).

The discussion paper considers the activities and role of IVCOs in contributing to development, highlighting their evolution from a North-South development model to models designed to also support the capacity of local organisations, the enabling environments for civil society, and facilitate continued reciprocal learning for global citizenship.<sup>2</sup> These roles reflect the broad range of IVCOs’ programming and form the rationale for many of the concepts and recommendations described in this paper. Working on this basis, the paper outlines the target audiences Forum members hope to reach and outcomes Forum members hope to achieve with the resulting information, and links these directly to the implications they have for measurement and reporting options.

As is described in this paper, the measurement of IVCO contributions must be taken in the context of other volunteer work taking place globally, and other efforts and opportunities to measure these contributions, so that any metrics that are developed align with each other and can be useful to each other.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the paper provides a broad overview of existing measures of volunteer activity, both among Forum members and more broadly.

Possible tools for collective measurement and reporting by Forum members are described. The first of these is a tool to map specific volunteer activities against the SDG

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<sup>2</sup> Global citizenship brings together “aims of development education, fostering peace and understanding between people from different contexts, and generating a sense of connectedness, responsibility and belonging in a globalised world, as well as an understanding of the root causes of global poverty and how citizens can engage positively to try to change them” (Comhlámh & VOSESA, 2013). See also IVCO paper by Plewes and Stuart (2007).

<sup>3</sup> “Volunteer-involving organizations should strengthen the way in which the contributions of volunteerism to peace and development are articulated, measured and reported. That can be done by promoting comparable tools and mechanisms for measuring the contribution of volunteerism to development and for assessing the positive benefits accrued to those who volunteer” (UNGA, 26 June 2015, para. 111b).

goals and targets. This sort of exercise could result in the production of a crosswalk, i.e. a directory that would list typical IVCO activities in one column by type, and permit users to translate these activities across to the SDG goals and targets in another column. The second provides a flexible structure for reporting IVCO inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts – both in quantitative and qualitative terms – against the SDGs and other distinctive contributions IVCOs make, at either the SDG goal or target level, and can be used to report individually, or as a collective, at the national and/or international levels.

The tools presented in this paper were designed with IVCOs in mind, but are adaptable for use by other groups. Recognising that documenting the contribution of IVCOs is part of a larger conversation about the possibility of gathering information about other forms of volunteering sometimes overlapping and sometimes beyond the scope of traditional Forum member volunteer activities, this paper provides a brief overview of how information about these groups might be collected.

The discussion of measurement options leads full circle back to the roles IVCOs play in development work, leading to the presentation of several possible options for how Forum members might leverage their collective strength to improve enabling environments and the capacity of local volunteering and civil society organisations. The UNSG's recently issued report on *Integrating volunteering in the next decade* (UNGA, 26 June 2015) suggests this should include furthering research and data availability, strengthening the capacity of local groups to pursue partnerships with government, and pursuing legislative and policy changes to improve enabling environments.

It is hoped that this paper will spark discussion among Forum members and help them come to some conclusions about their interest in and capacity to produce and report collective measures, and identify next steps in doing so. To do so, it poses a series of questions to readers to help guide the discussion, which are presented below as well as at intervals within the paper.

In short, what we hope to impress upon readers is that the discussion of tools for collective measurement and reporting provides an opportunity for Forum and its members to continue to provide leadership in how volunteer groups can engage with the United Nations, the HLPF, Member States and other stakeholders in the next 15 years. Volunteer groups have achieved success in being officially recognised for their contributions to date, and with the adoption of the SDGs, the publication of the report by the UNSG, and the work together on a global research agenda, volunteer groups are poised to translate this recognition into policy action. Doing so will require coordinating our efforts and escalating the presence in those fora where change is still needed and where volunteerism can be

an integral part of SDG implementation. We therefore provide a set of recommendations for working together towards common objectives, which are intended to spark discussion among Forum members during the October 2015 IVCO conference.

***Questions for the conference:***

1. Does the idea that Forum member activity extends beyond traditional development activity to include civil society strengthening and learning for global citizenship have resonance? How do Forum members respond to the idea that their work encompasses ‘volunteering for sustainable development’? What other forms of volunteering do Forum member organisations support in a significant way?
2. Which potential policy and development objectives (or other suggestions) do Forum members hope to achieve in the context of sustainable development? How might Forum members use this V4SDG data to open spaces and create new opportunities and partnerships with donors, Member States, the HLPF and other stakeholders to achieve their desired policy outcomes?<sup>4</sup>
3. Are the criteria for measurement presented in this paper sufficient? Are more needed? Are any of these criteria not applicable for IVCOs?
4. What sort of information is collected by Forum members currently? Is information about basic resources, inputs and activities routinely collected? Are efforts made to collect information about outcomes and impacts? Is this information largely qualitative or quantitative in nature? How is such information made available to communities and volunteers, and does it play an empowering role for them?
5. Two tools are presented in this paper. Which of the options, if any, and at what level of detail, seem the most appropriate for Forum members? Why? How can they be further adapted to demonstrate the distinctive contribution of IVCOs to sustainable development?
6. Do the opportunities highlighted for collective action and research resonate with Forum members? How do they align with their current activities (especially at the national level) and donor priorities?

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<sup>4</sup> Some ideas for how alternative reporting structures might be utilised by the HLPF are described in Beisheim (2014, pp. 10-15).

# Key Recommendations

1. IVCOs should **make explicit the philosophical frames of their work** for the SDGs (for example, in the areas of development, civil society and global citizenship) as a basis for making decisions about what to measure, and how to measure it, **and these should be linked to defined policy objectives as well as considerations of downward accountability<sup>5</sup>** and inspiring action.
2. Measurement frameworks should be relevant, feasible, efficient, comparable, reliable and objective.
3. To foster relevance and ownership from the broader volunteering community, Forum members **should consider options that take into consideration both distinctive and common ground** in the conceptual and methodological development of a measurement and reporting framework (and potentially its implementation). This leadership role could help to foster documenting the contribution of all volunteering to the SDGs and hence provide a vehicle for the diverse volunteering community to find its collective voice and be heard in a new and powerful way.
4. If Forum agrees that collective efforts should be made to produce measures of their contributions to the SDGs, then it should **seek an organisation to coordinate the work and should seek funding and other support to assist it.**
5. Given its role as a named stakeholder in the Post-2015 process, **reporting** of the collective contributions of IVCOs (and other volunteer groups if this is achieved) to the SDGs **should be coordinated with the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group and with United Nations Volunteers as the key interlocutor for volunteerism in the UN system.**
6. Reporting language **should be simple, free of jargon, text-minimal and figure/chart-heavy** to ensure its accessibility to multiple stakeholders, including other volunteer groups, policy makers at the national level, UN bodies, other UN Major Groups and

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<sup>5</sup> Keystone (2006) defines downward accountability as “*HOW* an organization engages with its ‘beneficiaries’, builds relationships, and is accountable for results in ways that enable learning and improvement towards the achievement of its mission”. Development effectiveness emphasised by the Paris Declaration work highlighted the importance of mutual or multiple accountabilities: “Transparency, mutual and multiple accountabilities and internal democratic practices reinforce CSO values of social justice and equality.... Accountability is not limited to financial reporting, but should strengthen both institutional integrity and mutual public reckoning among development actors, particularly focusing on accountability with affected populations” (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, 2011).

named stakeholders, and the general and business community. **Video and mixed-media methods for reporting information should be used to encourage accessibility.**

7. **A volunteering for the SDGs manual** should be developed, drawing on the policy goals and data collected (and encouraging more parallel data collection through action research) to produce practical guidelines for how to better use volunteerism as a cross-cutting means of implementation for the SDGs at local, national and global levels.
8. The identification of collective measurement and reporting options makes us aware of opportunities **for collective research and action by Forum members. This provides a direct opportunity to** respond to the call for action outlined in the UN Secretary-General's report on *Integrating volunteering in the next decade* (UNGA, June 2015) to strengthen the available data about the broad scope of volunteering, and to better understand how data gathering might be used to improve practice, community ownership, engagement and partnership within the context of the SDGs. Forum members have an opportunity to leverage their considerable weight to make important differences in this regard and **should seriously consider these options.**
9. In particular, we strongly suggest that Forum members leverage their global perspectives, relationships with partner/host governments, and partnerships with other Forum members at the national level to encourage the implementation at home and where they work overseas of the ILO *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* by national statistics agencies to facilitate the collection of basic data about the size and characteristics of volunteering, as part of their efforts to support the development of local enabling environments for volunteering.
10. Efforts should be made to **align collective research and action with the emerging global research agenda** on volunteering's evolving priorities in order to coordinate efforts and maximise synergies.

## A. Objective

This paper will discuss options for documenting and showcasing the collective contributions of a diverse community of volunteers to sustainable development, in the context of the adoption by the United Nations of the universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, and will highlight the challenges and opportunities this presents for the international volunteer cooperation organisation (IVCO) members of the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum) specifically. It is hoped that this paper will spark discussion among Forum members and come to some conclusions about their interest in and capacity to produce and report collective measures, and identify next steps in doing so.

## B. Overview and Rationale

As with the Millennium Development Goals, the UN's Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will only be achieved with the active engagement of volunteers. Volunteer contributions to sustainable development are distinctive. Volunteers' close engagement with communities in need, their skills and motivation to contribute to more inclusive, active and cohesive societies, and modeling/facilitation of the reciprocal exchange of knowledge and skills among stakeholders make volunteers distinctive actors in support of the achievement of the SDGs.

The Secretary-General's synthesis report on the Post-2015 development agenda proposed "one universal and transformative agenda for **sustainable development**, underpinned by rights, and with people and the planet at the centre". It highlighted an integrated set of six essential elements to help frame and reinforce the sustainable development agenda of Member States delivered at the country level:



**Dignity:** to end poverty and fight inequality;  
**People:** to ensure healthy lives, knowledge and the inclusion of women and children;  
**Prosperity:** to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy;  
**Planet:** to protect our ecosystems for all societies and our children;  
**Justice:** to promote safe and peaceful societies and strong institutions; and  
**Partnership:** to catalyse global solidarity for sustainable development.<sup>6</sup>

The 17 SDGs endorsed late September 2015 are shown below. Associated with each of these goals, though not shown here, are global targets underneath these goals and a set of indicators that are currently under negotiation for measuring the success of the targets and improving accountability and practice.

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6 UNGA (2014). The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All lives and Protecting the Planet: Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General On the Post 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda. New York, UN.

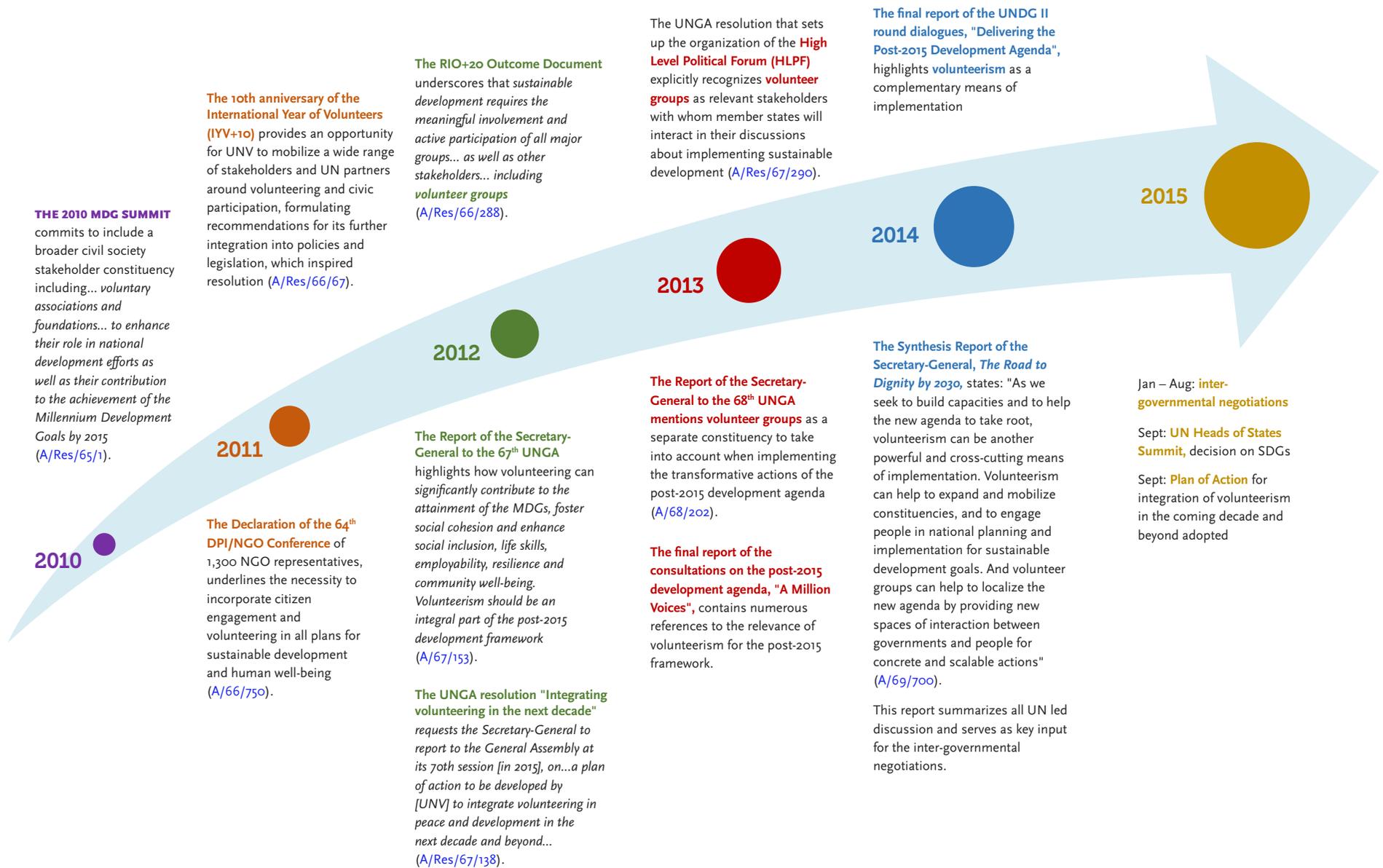
# THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- GOAL 1 POVERTY:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- GOAL 2 HUNGER:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
- GOAL 3 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- GOAL 4 EDUCATION:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
- GOAL 5 GENDER EQUALITY:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- GOAL 6 WATER AND SANITATION:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- GOAL 7 SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
- GOAL 8 DECENT WORK:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- GOAL 9 RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- GOAL 10 REDUCE INEQUALITY:** Reduce inequality within and among countries
- GOAL 11 SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- GOAL 12 SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- GOAL 13 ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- GOAL 14 OCEANS, SEAS, AND MARINE RESOURCES:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- GOAL 15 LAND AND BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- GOAL 16 PEACE AND JUSTICE:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- GOAL 17 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

While the distinctive role of volunteers has been articulated within development circles, it has not been widely understood or integrated into the broader development community agenda, though this is gradually changing. As a result of United Nations Volunteers (UNV)/Forum engagement, there was some recognition of volunteerism in the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness developed by hundreds of civil society representatives and groups. The framework adopted in June 2011 by CSO representatives from 70 countries explicitly recognised the contribution of volunteers to development effectiveness (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, 2011). Building on this sort of success, volunteer groups came together to form the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group to elevate the role of volunteers in the post 2015 discussions, and were able to achieve some successes.

Most notably, volunteer groups were recognised as a stakeholder in the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), the UN body that follows up and reviews the implementation of sustainable development commitments and, as of 2016, the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs. This is important because it gives volunteer groups the authority to contribute in an official capacity, which was bolstered significantly by the Forum funding and recruitment of a local coordinator in New York to liaise with the UN and other stakeholders. Out of this, volunteer groups coordinated several regional level dialogues on the SDGs, prepared position papers for the HLPF, and were given significant mention in the UN Secretary-General's Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (UNGA, 4 December 2014). The UNSG's synthesis report recognised volunteering as a "powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation" of the SDGs, able to "help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable actions" (UNGA, 4 December 2014, p. 36, para. 131). Moreover, volunteers are mentioned in the final draft of the Post-2015 outcome document adopted by Member States in September 2015 (UNGA, 12 August 2015), and in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda which was adopted in July 2015 and is intrinsically linked to the Post-2015 outcome document (UN TICFD, 2015).

Figure 1: Volunteering Milestones Graphic (courtesy UNV)



The growing recognition of volunteerism's role in development reflects the hard work of a diverse community of volunteer groups in strengthening their coordination, particularly through the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group, to make visible the distinctive, and often hidden, contributions of volunteering as part of the national and international post-2015 consultation processes (United Nations Volunteers, 2014). UNV has also played a particularly positive role in highlighting the achievements of volunteer groups around the world, including those of Forum members (UNGA June, 2015). Despite this progress, volunteerism does not permeate the SDGs' plans and processes at all levels. It is not clear that member states fully recognise the value that volunteers bring to sustainable development, let alone what makes their contribution distinctive. Nor have Member States or the HLPF articulated concrete steps to translate the recognition of the role of volunteers in achieving the SDGs. This is noticeable in the lack of mention of volunteers among the proposed indicators for measurement of the SDGs.<sup>7</sup>

A lack of sufficient recognition for the contribution of volunteerism to sustainable development has multiple origins, including historically limited coordination among volunteer groups in rigorously documenting and showcasing the collective contribution of volunteerism to peace and sustainable development, and also a lack of common definitions and measurement standards for doing so.<sup>8</sup> It is also, in part, a result of the fact that volunteering is a cross-cutting endeavour that contributed to all of the MDGs, and will do to all of the SDGs, and is not limited to supporting one single area of development.

***What's next for volunteer groups?*** When the SDGs are adopted, the international community will be focusing next on the implementation, monitoring and measuring of the goals. In this context, it is timely for volunteer groups to reflect together and make some decisions about the contributions they expect to make to the SDGs, and how they will measure, report and get recognition for these contributions. Volunteer groups seek the widespread and systematic integration of volunteerism into policy and practice at global and national levels. Without this, volunteer groups are at risk of being underfunded, under-valued and left on the margins of the SDG process as it is rolled out and shapes the development architecture for the next 15 years. Forum has played a decisive role in taking these issues to where they are today, along with others like UNV and IAVE, and now is an opportunity to provide leadership amongst Forum members and with other volunteer groups to cement this progress into concrete policy change.

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<sup>7</sup> List of proposed indicators as of 7 July 2015: <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/IAEG-SDGs-list-of-proposals-20150707.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Some reflection of these issues was made in UNV's contribution to the CIVICUS State of Civil Society Report. See United Nations Volunteers (2014).

For this reason, Forum and the wider membership of the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group have discussed the possible development of metrics to document the contribution of volunteerism to the SDGs. An effort to document the global contributions of volunteers to the SDGs provides an opportunity for volunteer groups (including Forum members) to engage in a collective way in generating and reporting information about their work to Member States and other stakeholders. This could achieve four simultaneous purposes:

- A. Connecting the objectives of volunteer programs to the objectives covered by the SDGs;
- B. Facilitating the collection, organisation and reporting of the contributions individual organisations make to the SDGs through volunteering;
- C. Allowing volunteer groups to feed into an aggregating reporting framework at the global level; and
- D. Providing a basis for diverse volunteer groups and VIOs to demonstrate their substantial collective contribution to sustainable development and coordinate their work in areas of mutual interest and synergy.

## C. Role and Scope of IVCO Volunteer Activity

### **Box 1: United Nations Volunteers concept of volunteering**

The terms *volunteering*, *volunteerism* and *voluntary activities* refer to a wide range of activities, undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor. Within this conceptual framework, at least four different types of volunteer activity can be identified: *mutual aid or self-help*; *service to others*; *participation or civic engagement*; and *advocacy or campaigning* (UNGA, 10 January 2002).

### C 1. SCOPE OF VOLUNTEER EFFORT PRESENT AMONG FORUM MEMBERS

Multiple forms of volunteering will contribute to the SDGs, including direct volunteering (informal), organisational volunteering (formal) including that of volunteer support, sending or international volunteer cooperation organisations, and corporate or employee. Forum members embrace several different forms of volunteering within their programs directly, and facilitate or support the development of other forms through their work. A collective measurement effort would therefore need to ensure that these activities of these

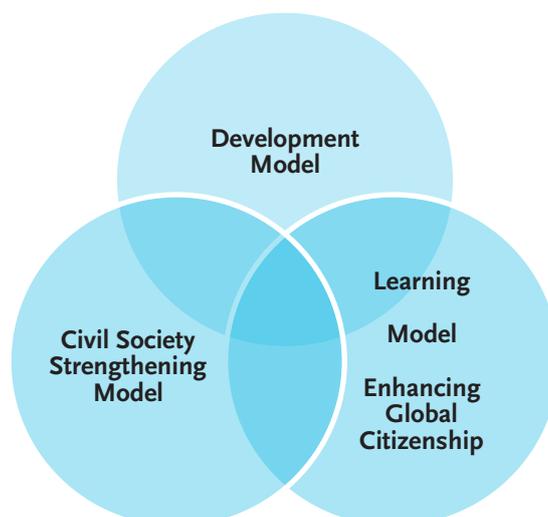
various forms of volunteering are considered in developing a measurement framework.

In the past, IVCOs engaged primarily in international sending programs, dominated by programs that sent volunteers from richer countries to poorer countries, with the exception of UNV, which always included volunteers cooperating South-South or working in their own country. For most IVCOs, the focus was commonly on technical assistance, centred around concerns like poverty alleviation, health and agriculture, but also often with a sense of solidarity.

While earlier forms of volunteering continue, many Forum members today also engage in a broader set of volunteer programs, including South-South and South-North sending programs, online volunteering, international corporate volunteering, and efforts to build up a local volunteering base and supportive infrastructure. Here, their contributions are increasingly focused on providing support through facilitating local volunteering, advocating for enabling environments, and furthering research on volunteering. This aspect of their work makes Forum members similar to volunteer support groups that do not engage volunteers directly, but rather carry out activities in support of volunteers. And finally, a growing area is when emerging economies send international volunteers beyond their borders, and the experiences of countries like China, Brazil and Korea will provide new insights into this.

The scope of volunteer effort amongst Forum members has reflected philosophical and pedagogical issues that shape policy goals and volunteer effort. Plewes and Stuart in 2007 suggested to Forum that they saw three rationales for IVCO volunteer cooperation: a *development model* contributing to poverty reduction and social justice (or a variation of this in a partnership or reciprocity model); a *civil society strengthening model* building democratic capacity; and a *learning model* developing global citizenship.

**Figure 2: Rationales for Volunteer Cooperation<sup>9</sup>**



With the new global context of emerging economies playing a major role in global politics and the global economy, and the new frame of universal SDGs, the old development model focused on poor countries has been transformed to one where there is, for example, a focus on inequality not just between countries but also within countries, and a challenge to rich countries to tackle their unsustainable practices (like those giving rise to climate change, where the strongest impact is on those like Bangladesh with least responsibility for it).<sup>10</sup> It is in this new context where Plewes and Stuart’s second two models on strengthening civil society and developing global citizenship have particular relevance for IVCOs, though also connected with a renewed development model emphasising living within ‘planetary boundaries’<sup>11</sup>, social justice, poverty eradication, wellbeing and tackling inequality. It is these global transitions that have heightened talk amongst IVCOs over the last 10 years on all opportunities in “volunteering for development” rather than just “international volunteering” models and language.<sup>12</sup> With the adoption of the universal SDGs, the language will inevitably shift increasingly to “volunteering for sustainable development”.

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9 Modified from Plewes and Stuart (2007). It is worth highlighting that to some extent the need for this explicit distinction is because a predominant focus on ‘development as practice’ has undermined the view of development as a broad goal that presents a wide vision for ‘positive change’; accounts for the historical processes of social change as well as deliberate efforts at improvement (Thomas, 2000).

10 This highlights the important principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ still recognised in the UNSG Synthesis Report on Post-2015.

11 The SDGs give recognition for the required integration of addressing the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Addressing environmental concerns as part of volunteer assignments has traditionally been a small proportion of most IVCOs’ focus, but the reality of several areas where ‘planetary boundaries’ have been exceeded and jeopardise human survival now demands a serious response from IVCOs. Oxfam provided a powerful case for this in its 2012 publication *A Safe and Just Space for Humanity: can we live within the doughnut?* See Raworth (2012).

12 This is reflected, for example, in the language of the 2015 Forum Research Strategy for 2015-2018.

A constructive example of work at this interface between international, national and local volunteering for development is documented in *The Role of Volunteering in Sustainable Development*, which reports on the conclusions drawn by VSO's 'Valuing Volunteering' research project. VSO volunteer researchers "followed a diverse range of volunteer interventions: from self-help and community volunteering through to formal national and international volunteering programmes supported by different organisations and institutions. The case studies explore the contribution of volunteering across different contexts and issues including: access to education and health, governance and the environment" (VSO & IDS, 2015).

Recognition of the growing trend towards a new development model focusing on building local capacity is provided in Box 2 below.

**Box 2: The Case of International Health Volunteers in Sub-Saharan Africa: Building and Supporting Local Capacity vs. Service Delivery**

Queries about volunteering in isolation from a social justice emphasis in order to tackle causes not just symptoms are an important reminder of the need for work beyond just practical development work. Laleman et al. 'aimed to quantify the contribution of international health volunteers to the health workforce in sub-Saharan Africa and explore the perceptions of health service managers about these volunteers. They contacted 13 volunteer organizations having more than 10 full-time equivalent international health volunteers in sub-Saharan Africa and estimated that they employed together 2072 full-time equivalent international health volunteers in 2005. They noted trends towards more employment of international health volunteers from low-income countries and of national medical staff. Country experts express more negative views about international health volunteers than positive ones. They see them as increasingly paradoxical in view of the existence of urban unemployed doctors and nurses in most countries. **Creating conditions for employment and training of national staff is strongly favoured as an alternative.** Only in exceptional circumstances is sending international health volunteers viewed as a defensible temporary measure. International health volunteers contribute relatively small numbers to the health workforce in sub-Saharan Africa, and it seems unlikely that they will do more in the future' (Laleman et al., 2007).

IVCOs are largely divided into two groups: non-governmental, like VSO, CUSO International, AVI and WUSC-CECI, and governmental, like FK Norway, JICA-JOCV, World Friends Korea and Peace Corps. The UN Volunteers Programme is the only multilateral IVCO, though there have also been regional endeavours of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States. UNV merits special attention because of the size of its volunteer mobilisation (particularly South-South) and global convening, norming and policy advocacy roles. The government/non-government distinction, however, has been challenged by the often large dependence by non-government IVCOs on government funds, which some have suggested compromises their independence

from government (Lough, 2015). Because funding sources do not adequately capture differences among IVCOs, it can be powerfully argued that the organisations should rather be categorised by differences in the power and strength of their values and constituencies. This approach seems more appropriate because even government IVCOs and UNV, like their NGO counterparts, distinguish themselves from other institutions by the people-centred values and citizen volunteers they mobilise. As a prime example, the Australian NGO-led but largely government-funded international volunteer program was described by the Australian Foreign Minister as the human face of the aid program.<sup>13</sup>

IVCOs in their diverse roles and endeavours are connected with transnational civil society and can demonstrate distinctive roles for the SDGs because of that. IVCOs make key contributions like transnational civil society ranging from “identifying emerging issues” to “facilitating grassroots voice”, “building bridges to link diverse stakeholders”, “amplifying the public visibility and importance of issues” and “monitoring problem-solving performance” (Brown & Timmer, 2006, p. 6).<sup>14</sup>

The situation of IVCO volunteers contrasts with the situation prevailing in most bilateral or multilateral projects, where power rests with the funder, and the ‘technical adviser’ is not under the control of the local organisation. IVCO volunteers are usually managed on a day-to-day basis by the local organisation for which they work, and are accountable first to this local organisation and only more broadly to the agency facilitating their volunteer stint and its broad aims and objectives (Devereux, 2008).

Reliance on the local South organisation for volunteer direction, guidance and support was particularly noticeable for volunteers through Australian Volunteers International because AVI deliberately avoided having local support offices to encourage greater mutual reliance and autonomy for the host organisation to decide how best to use the volunteer. This probably led to stronger relationships with and support from local host/partner organisations and greater agenda setting by them (this was also highlighted many years ago by Weyers and Pinkau (Weyers, 1981)). In 2004, they abandoned the practice of not having local support offices when government policy forced a change (Devereux 2010).

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13 See Focus 2001 accessed 8/9/2015 at [http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/Focus\\_Sept\\_2001.pdf](http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/Focus_Sept_2001.pdf) Note the 2015 evaluation of FK Norway explicitly focuses on “how FK Norway is equipped to achieve the objective of helping to strengthen civil society in developing countries”.

14 Examples of how Forum has played this distinctive role are exhibited throughout the Post-2015 process. The fact that Forum picked up in 2012 on the importance of post-2015 for the future of volunteerism (with encouragement from UNV) is a good example of its identification of emerging issues. IVCOs have made a strong effort to provide opportunities for national partners to take the UN stage to present volunteering from a grassroots perspective, and the post-2015 working group that began as a Forum-only group soon also involved groups like IAVE, the YWCA and the Guides and Scouts, thus building bridges with diverse stakeholders.

However, even with local support offices of AVI, UNV and VSO (and many others), the volunteers usually sit within the government, NGO or institution where they work and are managed most directly at that level.

For IVCOs, development and sustainable development is about people. IVCO volunteers respond at an individual, technical and personal level to broad development goals (including strengthening civil society and global citizenship), as well as immediate technical deficiencies, through the pursuit of mutual capacity development and understanding. International volunteers highlight the importance of local accountability, respect for local values and knowledge, the appropriate pace and character of interventions, and the need to remain engaged despite difficult conditions – all fundamentals of capacity development. IVCO volunteers are also able to challenge the causes of social injustice in a small way, through individual and collective action, not only while they are overseas but also on their return home. Finally, sustainable development is an integrating, holistic and practical concept that international volunteers implicitly promote as they relate to local people's needs with a genuine spirit of mutual accountability in their own country and overseas (Devereux, 2008).

Based on the IVCO grounding above, it is recommended that a collective measurement tool developed as part of a global measurement framework should capture the following forms of volunteering supported by Forum member organisations:

- international volunteering (3 months or longer)
- international volunteering (less than 3 months)
- diaspora volunteering
- organisation-based domestic volunteering, including government and non-government
- volunteering infrastructure support
- developing country national volunteering
- returned international volunteer volunteering
- online volunteering

**Questions for the conference:** *Does the idea that Forum member activity extends beyond traditional development activity to include civil society strengthening and learning for global citizenship have resonance? How do Forum members respond to the idea that their work encompasses “volunteering for sustainable development”? What other forms of volunteering that are not on this list do Forum member organisations support in a significant way?*

## C 2. OTHER FORMS OF VOLUNTEERING ABSENT, OR PRESENT IN LIMITED AMOUNTS, AMONG FORUM MEMBERS

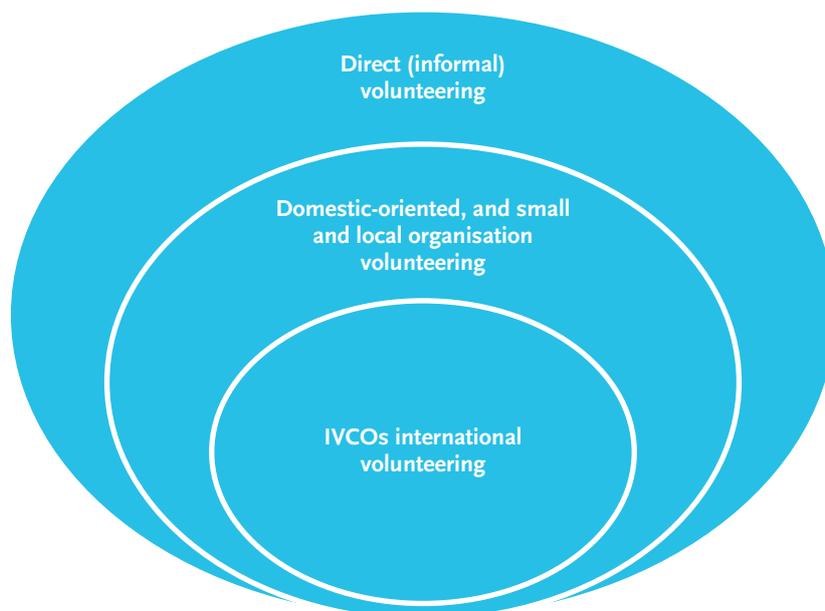
The types of volunteer activities identified above represent only some of the many forms of volunteering and volunteer support activities that take place worldwide. These other forms of volunteer activity have generally been assumed to be outside the scope of Forum member organisations, or irrelevant for the IVCO development focus. However, the universal SDGs highlight the complementary and growing power and relevance of the civil society and global citizenship areas of emphasis. While any measurement tool(s) developed should be maximally useful to Forum members, these tools might be broadly appealing to other organisations supporting different types of volunteer engagements and of added value for the sector if more groups use them. In considering the various options for measurement and reporting discussed in this paper, options that could also be utilised by the following groups might be kept in mind:

- A. *Domestic-oriented, and small and local organisations and VIOs.* Most of the organisations through which volunteers engage are small and local, not affiliated with a network. Additionally, there exist many large national networks that are exclusively domestic-focused and not members of Forum. Despite the significant work carried out by the volunteers working through Forum members, often for longer periods of time, these are outmatched by the sheer numbers of domestic volunteers that engage in local organisations as part of their daily lives. This is demonstrated in the numbers reflected by the Volunteer Action Counts campaign in the lead-up to Rio+20 in 2012, when the UN Secretary-General highlighted the results of over 64 million volunteer actions (UNGA, 28 June 2012). Included in the collective numbers can be those micro- or episodic-volunteers (those that participate in very short term engagements), online volunteers, and short-term travel-related/voluntourists who engage under the auspices of an organisation.
- B. *Direct (informal) volunteering outside the context of an organisation.* Like the small, local and domestic-oriented groups described above, Forum member organisations do not engage direct (or informal) volunteers that operate outside the context of an organisational setting. This form of volunteering, sometimes called “helping” or “neighbouring”, is thought to be the major share of volunteer activity in many countries (Salamon et al., expected 2016). Included here are those micro-volunteers (those that participate in very short term engagements), online volunteers and anyone else that engages outside the context of an organisation, including the individual actions of volunteers in

collective action on environmental, human rights and other issues.

- C. *Corporate or employee volunteer programs.* While some IVCOs engage corporate volunteers, or place their volunteers inside a corporate volunteering program, this does not comprise a major portion of their activity. Most corporate volunteering programs network through other venues, such as IAVE's Corporate Volunteering Board, through the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy (CECP), and the recently-established Impact 2030, designed to engage corporate volunteer programs around the SDGs.
- D. *Short-term travel-related/voluntourism.* While some IVCOs engage shorter-term volunteers, most of this activity is carried out by non-Forum members. It is a voluminous contribution to international volunteering numbers that is now an area receiving very significant academic attention in publications and journals. The frequent negative critiques as well as occasional positive recognition this draws make it an important area for attention given the huge numbers involved and will eventually require discussions about how to include such wider representation of groups within the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group and the HLPF activities generally speaking.

**Figure 3: International Volunteering in the Context of the Broader Scope of Volunteer Activity**



Options for documenting the contribution of the above groups are described in Section H.

## D. Target Audience and Outcomes

Key to determining what information will be collected is first identifying the outcomes Forum members hope to achieve with the resulting information. This step is crucial because this will frame subsequent decisions about what to measure, how to measure it, and how to report it. To some extent, this may involve a shift from reporting largely against donor requirements to a more proactive endeavour by Forum members to capture what they, and those that partner with them or volunteer through them, consider to be the most distinctive and valuable contributions. And a collective approach that includes other types of volunteer groups, such as those IVCOs partner with, can make a new and stronger case that has added credibility because of the volume and weight of diverse organisations that participate, including State-run and NGOs of varying sizes.

Four broad types of outcomes might underscore the rationale for collective measuring and reporting by Forum members.<sup>15</sup>

- A. Perhaps the most salient is its potential to demonstrate in concrete terms the real power of volunteerism to national and local governments who are critical for creating enabling environments to foster volunteering (Wallace et al., 2015). Key outcomes sought to strengthen civil society, volunteer infrastructures, and enabling environments at the national and international level include:
  - i. inclusion of volunteer groups on national SDG coordinating committees and other related structures;
  - ii. inclusion of volunteer groups in national-level indicators on SDG progress;
  - iii. changes in national legislation or policy in support of local civil society and volunteering infrastructures at home and abroad; and
  - iv. changes in legislation or policy that improve the enabling environment for civil society and volunteering.
  
- B. Also important is its potential to bolster engagement by diverse volunteer groups with the High-level Political Forum, UN agencies, intergovernmental bodies and Member States by providing tangible evidence of the scope and scale of volunteerism and its contribution to the SDGs. Means of implementation (Goal 17) for the SDGs has been a critical discussion in the post-2015 discussions and volunteerism plays a key role because it can help shape how the SDGs are

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<sup>15</sup> These are indicative suggestions only and Forum members will need to discuss and agree on their own priorities.

implemented to get community ownership and action. Increased recognition for volunteer groups within the High-level Political Forum, and all of the discussions and debates that take place within the UN system, include these outcomes:

- i. mention of volunteering within the SDG indicators;
  - ii. prominent and significant mention of support for volunteer groups (or lack of) within the next global report on progress achieving the SDGs; and
  - iii. increased share of SDG funding in support of V4SDGs.
- C. Measurement and reporting provides an opportunity for Forum members to reflect on the interaction they have with other volunteer groups, and opens up opportunities for self-reflection and improved performance. More specifically, to:
- i. highlight and demonstrate the distinctive cross-cutting roles/contributions of IVCOs with transnational civil society for the SDGs, which include: identifying emerging issues, facilitating grassroots voice, building bridges to link diverse stakeholders, amplifying the public visibility and importance of issues, and monitoring problem-solving performance.
  - ii. understand better the different complementary contributions of other types of volunteer groups at national and international levels to the SDGs and reflect on how to enhance synergies, both among various types of volunteer groups (e.g. international, national, corporate) and across sectors (e.g. health/environment/education/agriculture). Key outcomes here might include partnerships among different volunteer groups to produce joint research projects and publications; preparation of joint statements or actions; and facilitation of greater use of standard language and definitions of volunteering by different volunteer groups.
  - iii. engage in self-reflection on these roles and apply these lessons to achieve better development outcomes.
- D. Increased recognition and support among donors and home governments in the form of funding, media recognition, policy recognition, support and understanding, and integration in national planning.

**Questions for the conference:** *Which of the above potential policy and development objectives (or other suggestions) do Forum members hope to achieve in the context of sustainable development? How might Forum members use this V4SDG data to open spaces and create new opportunities and partnerships with donors, member states, the HLPF, and other*

stakeholders to achieve their desired policy outcomes? <sup>16</sup>

## E. Key Criteria for Measurement

Various approaches for collecting information are available to Forum members, but in considering these, some preliminary considerations about the criteria must be articulated. This is not an issue just for IVCOs, but for everyone involved with the SDGs. As UNEP highlighted in its 2015 paper *A Common Approach for developing SDG integrated indicators*, “Institutional capacities to collect data from different sources, compile evidence from the relevant knowledge domains and deliver indicators for reporting at the national and global level need to be aligned to avoid duplication and enhance streamlining” (United Nations Environment Programme, 2015).

To assist alignment, UNEP further highlights important lessons learned: “Experience from the MDGs and other processes shows that to be successful, indicators must be SMART, avoid duplication, and be consistent with existing standards and agreements. They should be meaningful, scientifically credible, statistically sound, consistent over time, and sensitive to root causes, drivers and underlying phenomena. They should allow international comparison and be universally applicable”.

From our perspective, a collective measurement and reporting framework will only be useful if it meets the following criteria:

- A. **Relevant:** The information that is collected must reflect the specific work contexts, activities and policy goals of Forum members (both alone and with other volunteer groups), and should limit the collection of information that is only tangentially related. The information collected should also assist downward accountability to communities and volunteers and be useful to them too.
- B. **Feasible:** Forum members must be able to collect and report this information at various levels of detail, and must, in addition to taking technical abilities into consideration, consider the availability of staff and volunteers to dedicate time to such an endeavour.
- C. **Efficient:** The information should, as much as possible, build on Forum members’ existing data-gathering and reporting frameworks.
- D. **Comparable:** The information should seek to be comparable across

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<sup>16</sup> Some ideas for how alternative reporting structures might be utilised by the HLPF are described in Beisheim (2014, pp.10-15).

organisations and countries to ensure the widest possible use.

- E. **Reliable and Objective:** The approach should be designed to obtain the same data regardless of who collects it so that it can be captured repeatedly over time to show trends. To assist this, the information collected should, where feasible, be grounded in empirically observable and testable features, or at least verified by triangulation of different sources.

In addition, it is important to draw on lessons learned from recent approaches to impact evaluation in the field of development, including “the different implications of using quantitative and qualitative methods and the importance of mixed methods; ...the importance of collecting data in a manner that is rigorous, systematic and strategic, and of using that data not only for (upward) reporting imperatives but also for learning and the empowerment of community stakeholders; the need to think through questions of stakeholder accountability in project evaluation, and in particular, accountability to the communities in which development projects are taking place” (Australian Council for International Development, 2012).

### ***Questions for the conference:***

*Are these criteria sufficient? Are more needed? Are any of these criteria not applicable?*

*What sort of information is collected by Forum members currently? Do they routinely collect information about basic resources, input, and activities? Are efforts made to collect information about outcomes and impacts? Is this information largely qualitative or quantitative in nature? How is such information made available to communities and volunteers and does it play an empowering role for them?*

## **F. Existing Measures of Volunteer Activity**

### **F 1. COLLECTIVE MEASURES OF FORUM MEMBERS**

Beyond the information that has been generated about individual Forum members, less effort has been made to report on the scope and scale of work by Forum members as a collective group. A survey of members for preparation of the 2012 IVCO discussion paper on MDGs, SDGs, Post-2015 and volunteers showed quite limited benchmarking by IVCOs against MDG achievements (Devereux & Guse, 2012). A 2013 paper presented by Ben Lough at IVCO 2013 drawing on short-term research in Kenya and Peru was well received and fostered a desire for more reporting (Lough & Mathews, 2013). Current research

includes a grant to Rebecca Tiessen and Ben Lough funded by the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada on Effective Practices in International Volunteering, which will include fieldwork in 12 developing countries over 2015-18.

The declarations that have emerged from annual IVCO conferences since 2011, and the publications of the Forum Research Working Group, have made small inroads of collective voice, but a more frequent and systematic approach is needed. What is more, not much information can be drawn on the topic of international volunteering from existing measures of volunteer activity. Some national surveys have included a question about international volunteer activity carried out by citizens, but the inclusion in a national level survey has been limited.

## F 2. INCORPORATING QUALITATIVE INFORMATION TO ACHIEVE 'MIXED METHODS'

Gathering qualitative information is a useful way to highlight the distinctive contributions of volunteer groups, and that makes the point that an SDG implementation plan that does not account for the involvement of volunteers can always be only partially successful.

Forum members are likely to have some existing qualitative information available that could be collected within the context of an SDG measurement framework. Some of this is reflected, for example, in the largely qualitative research by Devereux and Lough that explicitly engaged with IVCOs as part of their research endeavours and which, through triangulation of data from volunteer, partners/hosts, communities and IVCOs, highlighted the cross-cutting elements of volunteerism as particularly powerful and distinctive in the development context (Devereux, 2010; Lough & Mathews, 2013). These included, for example, strengths of building trust, developing capacity and relationships or bridging and networking between different people and institutions.

Other information is available through both the [Volunteer Action Counts](#) and [500 Days 500 Ways](#) initiatives. The 2015 report of the Secretary-General on *Integrating volunteering in the next decade* (UNGA, 2015) is also a rich compilation of individual and collective volunteer action that might be usefully tapped for a collective reporting framework.

In some cases, the qualitative information that might be available is that which sheds light on a barrier to progress identified by a volunteer group, a policy success attributable to a volunteer group, or knowledge of a solution to an entrenched problem within an SDG goal, target or indicator. Here, we are not talking about the achievement of the goals themselves, but rather seeking information about the contribution of volunteer

groups to the broader enabling environments for the achievement of the SDGs.<sup>17</sup> Included in the above is information that sheds light on local perceptions of Forum member activities.

### F 3. OTHER EXISTING MEASURES OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

A measurement and reporting framework designed to document and convey information about the contribution of Forum members to the SDGs, either as individual organisations or as a collective, would benefit from putting these findings into the context of other existing data sources where they can be found. Given IVCOs' growing focus on supporting local volunteer infrastructures, benchmarking volunteer rates may give them some indication of the collective impact of fostering volunteer infrastructures over time.

Further, any effort that seeks to document the contributions of the broader community of volunteers groups, including domestic, informal, and corporate volunteer groups, would need to take these additional data sources into consideration to help fill the information gaps that would arise in efforts to gather data about small and local groups, and informal volunteers.

**Organisational surveys are appropriate means of gathering information about certain forms of volunteer activity that take place through organisations that maintain a strong network, such as IVCOs and employee/corporate volunteering.** However, by and large, organisations do not often have accurate records of their volunteer activity (for a host of reasons)<sup>18</sup>, and furthermore, do not capture informal (direct) volunteering that takes place outside the context of an organisation. **This leaves population surveys, at present, as the most feasible methodology for capturing the magnitude of volunteer work, at least in quantitative terms, at the national level.**

#### *Overview of efforts to capture volunteering data at the national level*

Volunteering is largely performed irregularly, often sporadically, and in fewer numbers than paid workers. Therefore, adequately capturing its magnitude requires a

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<sup>17</sup> The CIVICUS Civil Society Index may have useful information in this regard. The index reports on national-level studies that describe local perceptions about the state of civil society, volunteering and philanthropy in the national context. This information could be very useful to volunteer groups seeking information about volunteering environments and sentiments across a broad range of countries. The 2011 summary report showed significant informal volunteering and people actually preferring that to work through organisations (CIVICUS, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> Since volunteering does not usually involve significant monetary transactions, it is often not explicitly mentioned or tracked in financial or administrative records. Even organisations that systematically engage volunteers often find it difficult (or see little point given busy agendas and time frames) to accurately record the exact amount and type of work performed by volunteers. Volunteers are also often reluctant to 'fill forms' in what they see as bureaucratisation of volunteering.

methodology that surveys a relatively large number of individuals and covers multiple reference periods. However, such surveys are expensive, so most volunteering surveys involve relatively small samples (such as the World Values Survey, 2009 and the Gallup Worldview Survey (English, 2011)), and attempt to cover a long reference period (typically one year), or try to bundle information about volunteering with information about other activities, like philanthropic donations, organisational membership, or other aspects of wellbeing (as is the case in the European Quality of Life Survey, (McCloughan et al., 2011)). As a result, these surveys suffer multiple problems that can lead to distorted and unreliable results.

Regularly updated basic data about volunteer rates and essential characteristics of volunteers at the national level are largely limited to high income countries, such as Austria, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, or the United States, who systematically track volunteering by robust national surveys.<sup>19</sup> Many other countries have developed one-off national surveys of volunteering, giving us some idea of basic data. But countries mostly limit their efforts to measuring volunteering that takes place through organisations, and for the most part ignore volunteering performed directly for other people or communities, i.e. informal volunteering (Einolf, 2011). And perhaps the most difficult aspect is the fact that these data are largely not comparable because different definitions of volunteering and methodologies for measuring it are used (key, as we saw under criteria in E.). This in fact may well be part of the reason for an underestimation of domestic volunteering in developing countries, though a number of studies and publications over the last 15 years start to demonstrate evidence that corrects this (Patel et al., 2007; Butcher, 2010a and b; Salamon et al., expected 2016).

### *The International Labour Organization Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*

To overcome problems inherent in general surveys of volunteering, and to facilitate the assembly of reliable and cross-nationally comparable measurements of volunteering, the International Labour Organization developed in 2011 a *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* (International Labour Organization, 2011). The ILO approach to gathering basic quantitative data about the amount and character of volunteering was developed by a group of international volunteer measurement experts and national

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19 Time Use Surveys (TUS) are conducted by national statistical offices in over 70 countries and collect information on the amount of time people allocate to their everyday life activities. Volunteering, both direct and organisation-based, is often included among these activities. However, the TUS methodology does have limitations, the most important of which are that volunteering often ends up hidden within other forms of activity for reporting purposes (mixed in with household duties or leisure) and that it does not record the type of volunteer activity carried out or the institutional setting where it was performed.

labour force statisticians, with support from UNV and the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies. The ILO Manual recommends the use of official labour force or other household surveys as the platform for measuring volunteering. The use of labour force and household surveys has particular advantages: they are based on large samples, involve short reference periods that minimise recall bias, and entail interviewing techniques aimed to minimise non-response bias. The ILO Manual captures organisation-based and direct (formal and informal) volunteering, and connects these data to all of the demographic variables of interest disaggregated by age, sex, employment status, household income, etc., being gathered as part of the survey platform, making this approach more cost-effective and efficient than stand-alone or private surveys.

**Box 3: The ILO Manual Definition of Volunteering:** <sup>20</sup>

*“Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organization or directly for others outside their own household or related family members.”* <sup>21</sup>

Implementation of the ILO Manual is voluntary, so it has been implemented only in some 10 countries to date. However, in 2013, at the ILO’s five-yearly gathering of the world’s labour statisticians, it was decided that the measurement of volunteering should be more strongly recommended as a matter for labour statisticians (nothing can be made compulsory by the ILO, but this recommendation is very strong), who are seeking to better measure the various forms of productive activity (19<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Labour Statisticians, 2013). With time, and with the support and encouragement of volunteer groups, it is hoped that basic data on volunteering will be routinely collected as part of regular data gathering efforts at the national level. This is a key opportunity for advocacy and encouragement by IVCOs in collaboration with other volunteer groups for the ILO Manual implementation in their own countries as well as in host countries. While these data will certainly not capture everything we would like to know about volunteering, it will provide an important baseline for benchmarking volunteering and assessing the impacts of policy and other interventions.

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<sup>20</sup> The definition is described in significantly more detail in the ILO Manual to clarify important concepts, such as the difference between reimbursement and payment.

<sup>21</sup> “Work” in this context means the production of goods and services of value and should not be confused with paid work or employment. It should also be noted that the definition highlighted here reflects changes made after the 2013 International Conference of Labour Statisticians and is therefore slightly different than the version in the printed ILO Manual.

## G. Measurement Options for IVCOs to Document Their Contributions to the SDGs

We now turn to the question of developing a measurement and reporting framework for Forum members to document their contributions to sustainable development, in the context of the SDGs. This section provides a preliminary set of tools for consideration and adaptation by Forum and its members that can be further developed to provide a framework for IVCOs to report on the outcomes and impacts their projects and programs are having, and relate these outcomes and impacts to the achievements of the SDGs.

**We underscore that these tools are not designed to provide prescriptions for how IVCOs might carry out impact assessments on individual programs and projects. Rather, these tools provide some initial thoughts about how this information might be reported and aggregated.**

Fundamentally, documenting the contributions of IVCO volunteer programs and projects to the SDGs requires explicit linking of these activities and outcomes to the SDG goals and targets. To do so, IVCOs will need to take a look at their existing and planned activities and determine how the objectives of these programs relate to the stated objectives of the SDGs.

At first glance, one might first assume it very straightforward to link an IVCO volunteer activity to one of the goals. For example, providing training to school teachers is clearly linked to SDG Goal 4.



**Upon further reflection, however, it becomes clear that many programs/activities respond to many SDG goals simultaneously and in synergy.** Consider the following activity drawn from an actual volunteer posting found on a Forum member's website: *technical support & advice to teachers of children with special needs through workshops & sports activities*. Here, we can see that the training provided contributes not only to education goals, but also supports the reduction of poverty and inequality (inclusion of marginalised groups in education, providing them with skills needed to avoid a life of poverty); the empowerment of women (if the teachers being trained are women); advancement of decent work (if the training opens up new employment opportunities); and potentially the development and strengthening of partnerships (if the training is carried out in collaboration with the

Ministry of Education, for example).



And this kind of mapping could also be carried out at the more detailed target level, as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Mapping of One Example of a Volunteer Program to the SDG Goals and Targets**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Technical support &amp; advice to teachers of children with special needs through workshops &amp; sports activities</p> | <p><b>SDG Goal 1: Eliminate Poverty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Target 1.5</b> build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations</li> </ul>   |
|  | <p><b>SDG Goal 4: Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Target 4.5</b> ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable</li> <li>• <b>Target 4.a</b> build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive</li> <li>• <b>Target 4.c</b> increase the supply of qualified teachers</li> </ul>  |
|  | <p><b>SDG Goal 5: Gender Equality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Target 5.5</b> ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership</li> </ul>  |
|  | <p><b>SDG Goal 8: Decent Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Target 8.5</b> achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities</li> </ul> <p><i>And possibly:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Target 8.6</b> substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training</li> </ul>            |
|  | <p><b>SDG Goal 10: Reduce Inequality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Target 10.2</b> empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all</li> </ul>   |
|  | <p><b>SDG Goal 17: Means of Implementation: Partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Target 17.16</b> enhance the global partnership for sustainable development complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries</li> </ul> |

## STEP 1 FOR IVCOS: DEVELOP A CROSSWALK

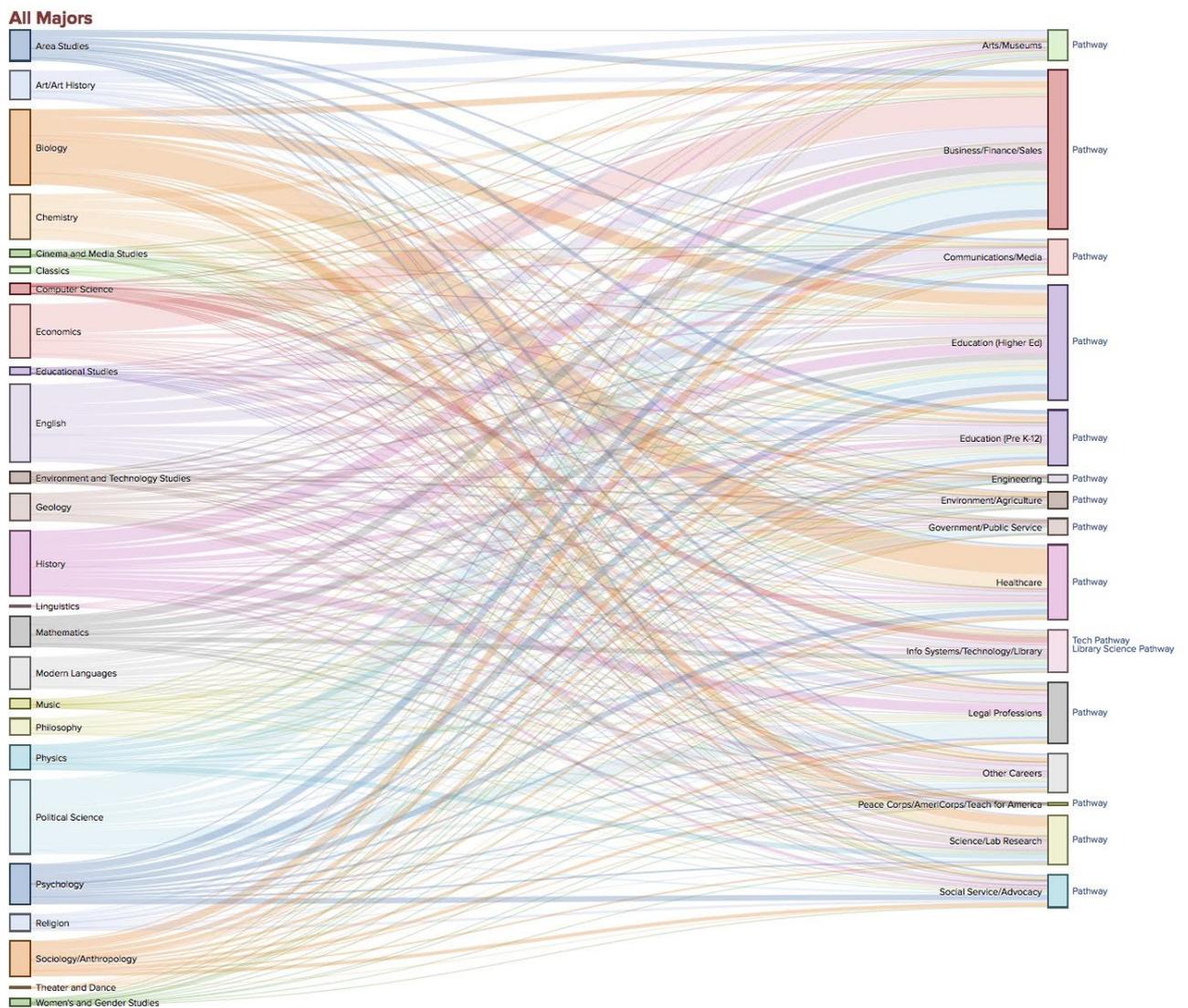
A first step for IVCOs, then, would be to develop a tool to map their specific volunteer activities and projects against the SDG goals and targets. This sort of exercise could result in the production of a crosswalk, i.e., a directory that would list typical IVCO activities in one column by type, and permit users to translate these activities across to the SDG goals and targets in another column (as shown in Table 1).

Developing a crosswalk would require preparation of a listing of typical IVCO activities. These could be complemented with the existing crosswalk in the ILO *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* (see Section F). It usefully links volunteer activities to established national classification systems for occupations, which will prove useful if this methodology is eventually expanded to include all volunteer groups. It will also further demonstrate to national governments the relevance of adopting the ILO Manual as a standard and useful measure of volunteer work.

Reversing the crosswalk would provide a comprehensive listing of the various activities of IVCOs that contribute to each SDG goal. The production of a crosswalk of this kind would, before any numbers are applied, on its own highlight the cross-cutting nature of volunteerism and show that the SDGs can be achieved in many different ways. For example, a crosswalk might show that VIOs might take several approaches to meet Goal 1: Ending Poverty. Thus, they might build capacity of teachers and improve curriculums, promote education and enforcement of actions to protect natural ecosystems that sustain livelihoods, create new jobs, design/deliver employment training programs, channel microcredit to small businesses, or improve productivity of subsistence farms, for example.

A visual representation of this crosswalk could make the point quite powerfully. One example of how this might be achieved is shown in Figure 4 below. In this case, the crosswalk identifies courses of study that college students pursued as a major, and then tracks these students across to the other side which lists career types where these students found employment. Thicker lines represent more students, thinner lines represent fewer students. As this figure shows, many students from certain majors ended up finding jobs in careers that might have been expected (biology to healthcare, for example). But this crosswalk also shows quite clearly, in a single page, the diversity of career outcomes that might result from any field of study. This visual could be replaced with volunteering activities on the left, and the SDGs on the right to make the same point.

Figure 4: Visual Representation of a Crosswalk - Example of College Majors and Career Outcomes<sup>22</sup>



This graphic is also interactive, allowing the user to learn more information by clicking on each line, college major, or career outcome to dive more deeply into the available information. Something similar could be developed for IVCOs.

## STEP 2 FOR IVCOs: ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIVITIES/ PROGRAMS

The next natural step for IVCOs is to pull together the evidence they have on whether

22 Carleton College, Career Pathways, Northfield, Minnesota, USA: <https://apps.carleton.edu/career/visualize/>

the programs they have carried out have made a difference. Clearly, while current IVCO programming has not been designed to articulate progress in achieving the SDGs in particular, most IVCOs will have already identified their own set of development objectives against which to gauge progress (e.g. in areas like health, education, livelihoods, jobs, climate change adaptation). The task, then, is to map where these align with the goals and targets defined by the SDGs *and* to note any important institutional activities/objectives that don't fit under the SDGs, as these may need to be highlighted separately (as will be discussed later).

Identifying specific methods for carrying out evaluations and assessments at program level is beyond the scope of this paper. However, considerable thought and work has been done to provide guidance on how to assess the impact of individual programs and projects, including by Forum and its Research Working Group. These range from the 2011 UNV publication *Assessing the Contribution of Volunteering to Development* with piloting work done by a number of Forum members, to the 2012 IVCO discussion paper *Assessing the Impact of International Volunteer Cooperation: Guiding Questions and Canadian Experiences* by Daniel Buckles and Jacques Chevalier. IVCOs looking for guidance on carrying out impact assessments might be reminded of some of Buckles and Chevalier's key findings in Box 4 below (bolding added). It might be expected that as time goes on, program objectives might explicitly articulate the SDG goals and targets so that program evaluations might be more easily aligned at an international level, and thus be more likely to attract more recognition, support and partnerships.

With regard to partnerships specifically, the Partnerships for SDGs online platform provides an opportunity for Forum and individual IVCOs (and their partners) to register their initiatives as a mechanism to achieve “multi stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments in support of the implementation of the SDGs and their targets” (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships>). As part of that process, an October 2015 UNDESA consultation with stakeholders would also provide opportunities to take volunteer collaboration and partnerships with other stakeholders to another level.

#### **Box 4: Buckles and Chevalier's Key Conclusions on Designing Impact Assessments**

“Navigating through the methodological options per se is useful and necessary only when some work has already been done to provide answers to questions regarding **what** needs to be assessed, for **what** and **whose purpose**, and **with whom**...

The design of impact assessments needs to match the purpose, the level of complexity and the constraints (time, resources, skills) found in each situation. To do so, it **must be flexible**, meaning that it:

- can mix tools and adapt them to match the situation;
- mesh and integrate both qualitative and quantitative thinking and findings;
- is practical and time-efficient (avoiding exhaustive data and text-heavy reports);
- can be scaled up or down, to meet needs and existing constraints (financial and human resources);
- can generate both project and higher level findings.

Our argument is ... **further innovation is needed** to ensure that impact assessments:

- bring together the processes of fact-finding and the construction of meaning in complex settings, aspects of evaluative thinking currently separated in mainstream methods (surveys, descriptive statistics, interviews, focus groups and storytelling);
- **serve purposes other than upward accounting** for resources and results, to include learning and adjusting plans for ongoing or future actions, or sharing a project or program story to inspire others with lessons learned;
- support an ongoing feedback, action-reaction loop (as in medical practice), to acknowledge learning from failure and constantly address the “So what?” and the “Now what?” questions;
- factor in the effects of uncertainty and complexity, including multiple stakeholder contributions to observed results;
- encourage **participatory approaches that facilitate interactive engagement and mutual learning and accountability.**”

### STEP 3 FOR IVCOS: DOCUMENT THE CONTRIBUTIONS THESE ACTIVITIES MAKE TO THE GOALS AND/OR TARGETS

Once IVCOs have identified the goals and targets their work supports, and compiled available evidence of its impact or effectiveness, the next step is to provide a mechanism for IVCOs to document these contributions and report them against the SDGs in particular. The assumption here is that IVCOs have already made the effort to evaluate these programs at a basic level, and that any tool developed here is designed to allow IVCOs to simply report against the SDGs in a manner that facilitates the collective aggregation of information from several organisations.

Reporting against the SDGs would include the typical measures that many IVCOs are likely already familiar with, usefully illustrated in a logic model featured in the UNV manual *Assessing the Contribution of Volunteering to Development*. Here the volunteer contribution is systematically tracked by detailing inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes or impacts, and mapping them against the SDG goals and targets.

**Table 2: A Generic Logical Framework For Volunteering For Sustainable Development<sup>23</sup>**

|  | LEVEL      | OBJECTIVES   |
|--|------------|--|
| This is the higher level impact to which all development workers hope to contribute to but which they do not have control over | GOAL       | e.g. Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals in selected sectors or across sectors (e.g. gender equality, governance)<br><b>NOTE: The Sustainable Development Goals have replaced the MDGs originally highlighted above</b>  |
| This is the longer-term contribution of the country program - cumulative impact of volunteering                                | PURPOSE    | e.g. Contribution to National Sustainable Development Goals in selected sectors or across sectors (e.g. gender equality, governance)   |
| These are the wider changes that come about through activities in partnership with others                                      | OUTCOMES   | Changes might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in people's lives e.g. economic, cultural, spiritual, personal, social, psychological, wellbeing</li> <li>• Shifts in gender and power relations</li> <li>• Changes in attitudes, ideas, awareness or behaviour</li> <li>• Group, community, organisational or institutional change, e.g. changes in practice, behaviours, priorities, resources or systems</li> <li>• Ongoing participation, commitment and support of a wide range of stakeholders</li> <li>• Strengthening of self-sufficiency/self-reliance/resilience among primary beneficiaries both communities and natural ecosystems</li> <li>• Development of open dialogue and trust between civil society and government</li> <li>• Changes in attitude about the value of volunteering</li> <li>• Empowerment of women and recognition of women's contributions</li> <li>• Organisations strengthened</li> <li>• New systems embedded (e.g. in government programs)</li> <li>• Pilot projects scaled up</li> <li>• Awareness raised about social and economic issues and pro-poor policies</li> <li>• Reduction of conflict</li> </ul> |
| These are the direct concrete results of what you do   | OUTPUTS    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of women/men/youths etc. trained</li> <li>• Systems strengthened and/or set up</li> <li>• No. of partnerships developed</li> <li>• No. of schools built</li> <li>• No. of documents published</li> </ul>  |
| This is what you do  | ACTIVITIES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building</li> <li>• Technical advice</li> <li>• Mobilisation</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Research</li> </ul>  |
| These are the resources put into the activity  | INPUTS     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of national and international volunteers</li> <li>• Number of hours/days/months dedicated</li> <li>• Financial/in-kind resources provided</li> <li>• Collaborative planning and work by diverse stakeholders</li> <li>• Technical expertise and local knowledge</li> </ul>   |

<sup>23</sup> Adaptation of UNV Table 1.1 in UNV (2011).

Another way that these elements have been collected in user-friendly qualitative ways is with the results tree tool, shown in Figure 5 below, which can be easily applied in a field workshop. Volunteers or community members draw a tree that represents their experience working as a volunteer or with a volunteer. The tree has: roots: the experiences and skills the volunteer brings; the trunk: institutions and organisations the volunteer is working with; branches: key activities that the volunteer is directly involved in; buds: the key successes of the volunteering; fruits: the results of the volunteer engagement, e.g. changes in peoples' lives, changes in the effectiveness of the institutions the volunteer is working with and/or other significant changes.

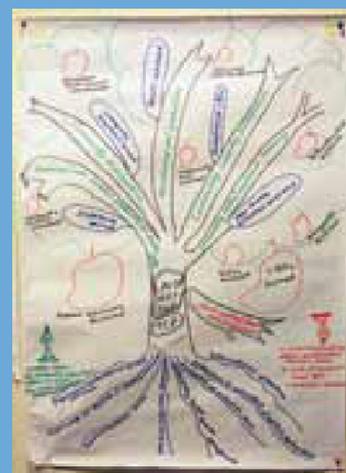
**Figure 5: Results Tree<sup>24</sup>**

### HOW ONE INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE IS VISUALLY DISPLAYED THROUGH A 'RESULTS TREE'

Thushan Kapurusinghe worked with the Turtle Conservation Project (TCP) in Sri Lanka in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. His tree diagram shows us ways in which he helped to change people's lives – the 'fruits' of improved community skills, the establishment of volunteer youth groups etc. – based on the 'branches' of community capacity development, training, mobilization, monitoring and evaluation activities.

It also notes how partnership with GEF and UNV was the basis of his endeavours – the trunk of the tree – and how the 'roots' of his personal experience fed into creating the results. And he is not shy to bring to our attention the challenges he faced, such as the 'broken branch' of unsatisfactory administration.

Effectively, the 'tree' distills a four-page report into one simple and easy-to-absorb image.



*Thushan Kapurusinghe's 'results tree' portrays many complex ideas at a glance. (UNV)*

The critical elements are the identification of 'outputs' leading to the 'outcomes'. Here, 'outputs' are the number of people, households or territorial units directly served by volunteer activities. The 'outcomes' are defined by the SDG goals or targets, which allows us to make some assumptions about the activities.

For example, consider the following hypothetical IVCO activity: *provide advocacy strategies and political engagement training for women*. Among the many possible outcomes and impacts of this activity, evidence would need to be found that some proportion of the women trained applied a skill that they learned in the training to politically engage, and

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Volunteers, 2011, p. 48.

this allows us to make the claim that the program supported progress towards the established SDG goal or target.

IVCOs would need to show how many women were trained, how many countries/communities were served by this training, how many IVCO volunteers were deployed to carry out the training, and how many local volunteers were leveraged in the process. With an evaluation, they should then have an idea of whether, and how much, the activity achieved the goal. This information might be available in quantitative and/or qualitative form. Quantitative data are more easily aggregated and compared, and the value of bringing the case for volunteers to the attention of policy makers in terms that they are familiar with should not be underestimated. Nevertheless, the proper qualitative information, rightly used, can have a powerful impact, particularly as part of rigorous mixed methods. For an inspiring example, see the experience of Hill Women in Rural Uttarakhand, India described by Sharma and Sudarshan (2010) and mentioned in the 2015 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (Wallace et al., 2015).

In many cases, narratives, case studies and evaluations that convey the quality of volunteer engagements and the perceptions of community members, local partners and service recipients on the ground can convey the important contributions volunteers make to the SDGs. Any reporting of the quantitative value of IVCO volunteers would not be useful without complementary qualitative information to provide a context for the figures.

The next task, then, is to map this information – the inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts – to the SDGs. Table 3 below provides an example of how two hypothetical volunteer activities might be reported against Goal 16.

Table 3 differentiates between activities carried out by IVCO volunteers directly, and those carried out by local volunteers or in partnership with local institutions. It also suggests a reporting of the rate of success of a program. Where detail is available, this would allow IVCOs to identify where successes are, and not simply where time and energy is being spent.<sup>25</sup> The table also identifies the links between the activities reported here and their contributions to other SDG targets.

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<sup>25</sup> To illustrate this, there was, for example, much more evidence of what was done than what was actually achieved in the IVCOs' input to the 2014 UNV/Forum paper on International Volunteers and Governance by Lough and Mathews. The Valuing Volunteering research done by VSO and IDS is a constructive example of what is demonstrable, perhaps enhanced significantly in this case by the VSO-IDS partnership on the project, which brought IDS's academic rigour together with VSO's long-term field experience in volunteer programming and management (IDS-VSO, 2015).

IVCOs need not let the established targets and indicators limit the scope of development reporting, and they might identify additional or alternative targets and indicators they think better reflect the volunteer added-value of their work in achieving the SDGs. As noted in Section C, IVCOs and development volunteers make key contributions as transnational civil society actors that include:

- identifying emerging issues
- facilitating grassroots voice
- building bridges to link diverse stakeholders
- amplifying the public visibility and importance of issues
- monitoring problem-solving performance
- reciprocal benefit
- local accountability and North-South partnership

The framework presented here can accommodate reporting of these achievements towards these complementary goals, and a placeholder column has been added to Table 3 to make the point. If this idea were taken on board, these complementary/alternative goals or targets should be identified in a collective way to ensure that they represent a substantial contribution to sustainable development that would otherwise go unnoticed.

A final column would provide the opportunity to report on partnerships established (thus linking the activities to Goal 17), and similar columns could be added to identify contributions to other specific goals (such as Goal 16). UNV, Forum and the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group have identified SDG Goals 16 and 17 as particularly relevant to the cross-cutting mission of volunteers and volunteer cooperation or volunteer involving organisations. Goal 16 promotes peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; Goal 17 aims to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development. These goals provide an opportunity to demonstrate the strong value-adding that volunteerism brings as an integrating mechanism that helps people and institutions better connect in partnerships of mutual benefit and allowing synergies or complementarity towards common goals/targets and indicators. Categorising this type of qualitative information into various groupings makes it possible to aggregate this information and report it in at least a rudimentary way.

SDG Goal 10 to reduce inequality is particularly pertinent to Forum and IVCOs' work as part of their role in transnational civil society, and might be considered a priority in addition to Goals 16 and 17. The inequality goal was recently highlighted as one that can particularly apply in developed and developing countries. For example, within Australia,

Indigenous groups have highlighted the significant indigenous disadvantage (e.g. a life expectancy gap of over 10 years between Indigenous people and others). It has been highlighted that under the 'leave no one behind' principle, a goal like inequality could not be considered achieved if one group is left behind.

As the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group stated in its submission to the HLPF, "Volunteer groups can play a critical role in mobilizing community participation and engagement, and in monitoring and evaluating the successes and addressing the SDGs at a global, national and local level. To this end, volunteer groups have submitted recommended indicators<sup>26</sup> to the UN Statistical Commission as a means of measuring the contribution of volunteerism to achieving targets under Goals 16 and 17" (Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group, May 2015).

A table of the kind shown below could be produced at the broad goal level, or further refined at the target level. It could be completed by an individual organisation to map their own achievements, or it could be aggregated to reflect the contributions of many groups. And finally, this table could be produced at the global level, or produced at national or regional levels, taking account of local policy objectives and indicators against which the achievements of IVCOs would be assessed.

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<sup>26</sup> To read the proposed indicators, see Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group (September 2015).

**Table 3: Aggregating the Contributions of Volunteerism to the SDGs**

| LOGIC MODEL ELEMENT   | INPUTS<br>Intern'l volunteers, partners & resources   | INPUTS<br>National volunteers, partners & resources leveraged                                | OUTPUTS<br>Numbers of people served, numbers of goods/services provided   | OUTCOMES<br>Program success as defined by SDGs  | IMPACT  | LINKS TO OTHER GOALS  | DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE   | PARTNERSHIPS ESTABLISHED  |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| IMPACT: SDG GOAL 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels |   |  |   |   |   |   |  |   |
| <b>Volunteerism Contribution:</b><br>Community mediation services   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 volunteers</li> <li>• 200 hours</li> <li>• \$5,000 in costs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 local volunteers</li> <li>• 500 hours</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 800 people served</li> <li>• Facilitated 300 mediation cases</li> <li>• 25 communities</li> <li>• 4 developing countries (list)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peaceful resolution of problem achieved in 250 cases</li> <li>• Skills, capacity and confidence of volunteers developed such that they take on new roles</li> <li>• Returned volunteers help partners apply for resources and lobby for policy change</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 83% more people given access to peaceful resolutions of conflict</li> <li>• Returned vols mobilise \$20K in funds</li> <li>• Policy change achieved</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal 5: Gender</li> <li>• Goal 10: Inequality</li> </ul>                                   | Building bridges to link diverse stakeholders and monitoring problem-solving performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With govt</li> <li>• With non-profit</li> <li>• With private business</li> </ul> |
| <b>Volunteerism Contribution:</b><br>Advocacy strategies and political engagement training for women  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 volunteers</li> <li>• 100 hours</li> <li>• \$1,500 in costs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 local volunteers</li> <li>• 150 hours</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5,000 poor women trained</li> <li>• 50 communities</li> <li>• 7 countries (list)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,000 women reported using a skill learned in the training</li> <li>• Lessons women learned in using skill shared with others</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% more women engaged in public affairs</li> <li>• Policy makers show increased concern for role of women</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal 1: Poverty</li> <li>• Goal 5: Gender Equality</li> <li>• Goal 4: Education</li> </ul> | Facilitating grassroots voice  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With govt</li> <li>• With non-profit</li> <li>• With private business</li> </ul> |

Table 3 achieves the following:

- A. Provides flexibility for Forum members to report the contributions of organisations individually and in aggregate to the SDGs;
- B. Allows for reporting at the national and international level;
- C. Provides options for reporting at the goal or target level;
- D. Provides flexibility for Forum members to report at various levels of detail, which permits them to use existing levels of information rather than asking them to report at greater levels of detail than may be feasible;
- E. Provides a mechanism for collecting qualitative and quantitative information;
- F. Provides a vehicle not just for reporting, but also for learning and empowerment of community stakeholders and accountability to them;
- G. Allows recognition of joint achievements of international and national and local partners and partnerships.

Ideally, this table would be completed using an online tool that would automatically link the activities to the other targets and thus self-complete the table. This kind of tool would also usefully provide a drop-down menu of suggested activities against which to report. Users could report against a standard set of activities, or insert their own under an 'other' option. Additional technology would allow the user to link particular qualitative inputs to related Internet links that could offer further detail, photos or video. This detail would need to be further developed and is not presented here.<sup>27</sup>

## OPTIONS FOR IVCOS

1. **IVCOs could develop a crosswalk identifying the links between their activities and the SDGs at the goal or target levels.**
2. **IVCOs could produce some version of Table 3 above at various levels of detail, including:**
  - a. **Track some or all of the SDGs at the goal level (identify two to three priorities)**
  - b. **Track some or all of the SDGs at the target level**
  - c. **Track an additional or completely different set of 'distinctive' contributions that more explicitly reflect the contributions volunteer groups want to highlight**
  - d. **Track additional features and links to other goals/targets, such as Goals 16 and 17**

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<sup>27</sup> Research software NVIVO might provide a useful tool for some of this analysis.

## DISCUSSION OF THE OPTIONS

### *Tracking established SDG goals and targets?*

Tracking the goals and targets as defined by the United Nations is the most obvious way to measure contributions to the SDGs in the same terms as other stakeholders and will thus make it more feasible to demonstrate the comparative advantage or value-adding of volunteering directly to policy makers.

### *Tracking alternative or complementary goals and targets?*

Volunteer groups need not let the established targets and suggested indicators limit the scope of development reporting, and might choose to identify additional activities and indicators that encompass the holistic contributions that volunteers bring in achieving the SDGs. To some extent, this ‘separate approach’ could be seen as building on the diverse but ad hoc IVCO monitoring, researching and reporting to date that has focused on volunteering for development specifically rather than prioritising its mainstreaming in MDG, or now SDG, reporting.

IVCOs may in this way continue to highlight the particular qualities and distinctive contributions they believe they bring to development. Proposing an alternative/additional set of targets or indicators might, on the one hand, move the focus away from the established goals, making it more difficult for volunteer groups to link their achievements to the SDGs and the reporting framework that Member States and policy makers will be using to assess the achievement of the SDGs. On the other hand, identifying new or additional goals, targets and indicators may be needed if volunteer groups do not think that the current SDG structure will permit them to document their contributions accurately. Additionally, IVCOs may feel that documenting these qualities will help them to better achieve their stated policy objectives in a way that measuring traditional development outcomes would not.

### *All or some of the goals?*

Tracking all of the SDG goals and targets is warranted because volunteer groups have highlighted the cross-cutting nature of volunteering, and have said that none of the SDGs will be achieved without the contributions of volunteers. Tracking all of the goals will help demonstrate the cross-cutting contribution of volunteerism that will help produce synergies across the SDGs. This could also seek to reflect IVCOs’ role as a transnational civil society actor with the value-adding of bridging and other roles along the lines of the principles mentioned earlier. Therefore, highlighting their contributions in all of the SDGs may be the most direct way of making this point. Also, complementary reporting on different SDGs by different IVCOs but under Forum

coordination could also achieve greater synergies and powerful breadth of coverage that could not easily be ignored by policy makers.

On the other hand, tracking all of the goals and targets might prove to be labour and time intensive. Focusing their efforts on documenting the contributions to Goals 16 and 17, with potentially an additional two-three priority goals related to individual IVCO priorities, might be more feasible for IVCOs to carry out, given limited time and resources available. IVCOs and volunteer groups might especially consider Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries, as an optional addition to Goals 16 and 17, given its cross-cutting nature and obvious relevance to both developing and developed countries. For example, this goal has equal relevance to situations in developing countries as to issues for Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and refugees or asylum seekers in developed countries.

#### *Track at the goal or target level?*

In considering this option, Forum members will need to consider what level of detail they think would be the most strategic in terms of measurement and reporting, and what they are capable of producing. Measurement at the SDG goal level is the most basic level and simplest approach, and a measurement approach tracking volunteer contributions at the goal level would make it much easier for every Forum member to participate.

Tracking contributions at the target or particularly indicator level will, however, give Forum members a stronger position vis-à-vis the High-level Political Forum and in other political fora. It will be thus less likely to be ignored because it will fall explicitly under headings that are reported against and so will provide IVCOs an opportunity to seek governments' inclusion of their achievements to assist national and international recognition from reporting.

Of course, an ideal measurement framework would aim to accommodate various levels of information and be flexible enough to allow for organisations to report at a greater level of detail while complementing this with data from those that are only able to report at a general level. The tool presented above seeks to provide this flexibility.

***Questions for the conference:*** Which of the above options, if any, seem the most appropriate for Forum members? Why?

## H. Bringing Diverse Volunteering Voices Together: Options for Gathering Information About Other Forms of Volunteering

This paper has suggested that an important purpose in documenting the contribution of volunteers to sustainable development, beginning with IVCOs, is to provide a vehicle for cooperation and coordination among the diverse stakeholders and perspectives in the volunteering community. Given also that for many Forum members supporting local volunteering is an important objective, Forum members need to consider options for engaging the voices from different volunteering groups or communities in the conceptual and methodological development of a measurement and reporting framework (and potentially its implementation).

This section provides an overview of how information on the contribution of other forms of volunteering might be captured as part of a collective measurement and reporting framework.

Efforts to do so should consider the growing momentum on the development and evolution of a global research agenda on volunteering for sustainable development (UNV, Forum, CSD, 2015; UNV and IFRC, 2015; UNV and Peace Corps, 2015), which should be considered in order to maximise synergies.

Any effort to gather a broader set of information about the broader contributions of volunteerism to the SDGs should be coordinated with the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group, which includes not just Forum members but also an international coalition of volunteer groups working in 146 countries that includes the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE)<sup>28</sup>, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and the YMCA. The Working Group is open to all organisations that work with and through volunteers – locally, nationally and internationally. The members of the Working Group represent the diversity of volunteerism and reflect the universality of the Post-2015 agenda. Members include international volunteer and cooperation agencies, volunteer-involving NGOs and academic institutions, as well as those working through corporate volunteering, diaspora volunteering, reciprocal volunteering and through volunteers in

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<sup>28</sup> The IAVE 2014 Call to Action from their International Conference was also an important tool for collective advocacy on post-2015. View it at <https://www.change.org/p/iave-members-friends-collaborators-a-call-to-action-from-the-board-of-directors-of-iave-the-international-association-for-volunteer-effort>.

their own countries. Thus, the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group provides a natural vehicle for coordinating the collection of this information from volunteers and volunteer groups and dissemination to target audiences.

## H 1. OPTIONS FOR MEASURING OTHER FORMS OF VOLUNTEERING AS PART OF A GLOBAL EFFORT

***Domestic-oriented, and small and local organisations and VIOs.*** Most of the organisations through which volunteers engage are small and local, often not affiliated with any network. Additionally, there exist many large national networks that are exclusively domestic-focused and not members of Forum. Despite the significant work carried out by the volunteers working with Forum members, often for longer periods of time, these are outmatched by the sheer numbers of domestic volunteers that engage in local organisations as part of their daily lives. Given most IVCOs are headquartered in developed countries, there has usually been limited attention to domestic volunteers as there are generally domestic organisations that focus exclusively on this domain. However, this is not to say IVCOs have no interest in liaison with domestic volunteers, because in their work in developing countries, many IVCOs actively partner with local volunteers both directly and through their work with local partner organisations. This active engagement with developing country national and local volunteers is reflected in the Valuing Volunteering research (IDS and VSO, 2015). A question that may need to be asked is to what extent are there opportunities and interest in extending this further to greater collaboration with volunteer-involving organisations in developed countries, given growing connections in our globalised world, even for them? This is on top of work by national volunteering agencies like in Wales or IVCOs like FK Norway and others that actively encourage community-to-community partnerships to facilitate volunteering through international exchange.<sup>29</sup>

Capturing information about these forms of volunteering would conceptually fit well inside any measurement and reporting framework developed for Forum members. The challenge for including domestic-oriented, and especially small and local organisations, in a global measurement and reporting framework centres on participation rates. Those that are connected to national networks, such as government volunteer schemes or national members of the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE), might be made aware of a collective measurement and reporting framework and see its value

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29 “FK Norway...mainly arranges reciprocal exchanges of personnel between organisations in Norway and developing countries....The exchange occurs in a partnership between two or more organisations or companies, with support from FK Norway.” (<http://www.contribute-to-change.eu/index.php/70.html>)

to shaping policy interventions and making a difference. However, it may be more of a challenge to make particularly smaller-scale, domestic-oriented groups aware of the effort and see its relevance to them in the context of their very local efforts. Meeting this challenge should be inspired by the considerable synergies and mutual learning that can emerge from working together as well as by its potential to highlight the critical concerns of those most in need and potentially the most active at a grassroots level. This approach needs agreement from Forum members that there is this mutual benefit and that it therefore warrants prioritisation.

If the participation of most or more volunteer groups in a measurement effort is considered to be the priority of a global measurement and reporting framework, then two options for engaging these groups are apparent. One method would be to develop an aggressive awareness-building campaign to show the mutual benefits for domestic-oriented volunteer groups in generating information about their volunteer activities, likely using measurement tools developed for Forum members with minimal adaptation. This might also reveal areas of synergy and value-adding from joint work where the sum of the parts is greater than the individual contributions.

A second method would be to target a sample set of organisations that could form the basis of a larger global estimate of activity. Both approaches would have the benefit of engaging volunteer groups in the development of the information, but unfortunately, these approaches would suffer from methodological weaknesses, even if large numbers of domestic volunteer groups could be mobilised to participate. The dominant weaknesses would include 1) a strong likelihood of response bias, with certain volunteer groups more likely to engage than others, thus skewing the sample; and 2) the lack of information available on the universe of organisations (typically, but not always civil society organisations) through which people volunteer would make it difficult to develop a stratified random sample of groups to measure.

If, on the other hand, the priority is to generate maximum data for domestic and local volunteer groups, and their participation in the development of these data is considered of secondary importance, then an efficient option would be to gather data using national surveys of individuals, not organisations. This approach would allow for the collection of data on a known universe (people) and would therefore be less likely to skew the information. Methodologies for gathering data on volunteering via national-level surveys have been developed, and in many countries have already been employed, the most well-known of which is that described in the International Labour Organization's *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* (see Section F). To preserve the participation component, volunteer groups could be engaged by collaborating with the survey-administering

institution in designing the surveys and analysing and reporting the results.

***Direct (informal) volunteering outside the context of an organisation.*** Like the small, local and domestic-oriented groups described above, Forum member organisations do not engage direct (or informal) volunteers that operate outside the context of an organisational setting. This form of volunteering, sometimes called ‘helping’ or ‘neighbouring’, is thought to be the major share of volunteer activity in many countries (Salamon et al., expected 2016).

By definition, a measurement tool that uses the organisation as the unit of analysis would not capture volunteering that takes place outside the context of an organisation. As such, information about this form of activity can only be derived from individuals themselves and could not take advantage of any form of organisational networks, like national volunteer centres.

Again, various options for gathering information are available, with pros and cons for each, depending on the priorities for a measurement and reporting framework.

If the participation of individual volunteers in a measurement effort is considered to be the priority of a global measurement and reporting framework, then the focus should be on engaging individuals to self-report. One approach would be to launch an aggressive campaign to encourage people to self-report their volunteer activities that contribute to the SDGs. As is the case for small and local organisations, this approach is fraught with self-reporting bias problems. Those who recognise their activities as volunteering, and those who do it in the first place, those in more urban settings with access to technology, those who are literate, etc., are much more likely to participate in self-reporting, thus skewing the sample.

If, on the other hand, the priority is to generate maximum data on volunteering for sustainable development, and the participation of individuals in the development of these data is considered of secondary importance, then an efficient option would be to gather data using national surveys of individuals. As described earlier, the *ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* offers an internationally-sanctioned methodology for doing so.

***Corporate/employee volunteering.*** The Committee for Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy (CECP) runs a regular survey about corporate philanthropy that includes questions about corporate volunteer programs (Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy, 2014). At present, this survey most likely represents the best available source of information about corporate volunteering. This survey could potentially be

adapted to more specifically target the generation of information related to the SDGs.

Of immediate note is that Impact 2030, a group representing corporate volunteering programs addressing the SDGs, is currently in the process of developing a measurement tool for documenting the contribution of their members to the SDGs. Forum members may wish to coordinate their efforts with this group, particularly vis-à-vis their interactions with the UN and Member States. IAVE's Global Corporate Volunteering Council, which boasts 50+ members, could also be usefully engaged.<sup>30</sup>

**Other relevant research.** The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme has now produced two *State of the World's Volunteerism Reports*, the most recent of which has focused on capturing and reporting information on the contribution to global governance (Wallace et al., 2015). This report would be particularly useful in developing a measurement framework focused on SDG Goals 16 and 17. It is to be hoped that the development of a global research agenda on volunteering for sustainable development will provide an umbrella for rigorous longer-term research that can bolster future SWVR reports with increasingly comprehensive data from mixed methods.

Also related is the DATASHIFT project, which is working to draw together citizen-generated data to complement official data gathering efforts and promote citizen partnership with government institutions in the development of official data.<sup>31</sup> It is clear that much of the citizen-generated data will be gathered by volunteers, and Forum members might be interested in discussing how the role of volunteers in generating citizen data might be highlighted, or how volunteers might partner with government agencies in developing official measures of volunteer activity and contribute to government efforts to collect qualitative data in remote areas to respond to the requirements of the agenda to capture inequality better.

## I. Collective Research and Action Possibilities

Section G of this paper described options for collectively documenting contributions of Forum members to sustainable development. Ambitious as they are, these options represent just the start of numerous research and other activities that Forum members

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.iave.org/corporations/gcvc/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://civicus.org/thedatashift/>

could collectively pursue in support of volunteering for development.<sup>32</sup> A number of possible action items for the broader category of volunteer groups (but including IVCOs as a subset) are outlined in detail in the UNSG's recent report on *Integrating volunteering in the next decade*, which explains why further action is necessary, saying that "The momentum built through recognition of how volunteerism contributes to peace and development and the promotion of the inclusion of more people, especially the marginalized, can only be maintained through supportive volunteerism policies, structures and capacities for effective volunteer engagement and management, including adequate resources. Facilitation of different volunteering schemes catering to varying needs of groups of people expands the range of opportunities for engagement and inclusion" (UNGA, June 2015, para. 24).

This discussion has also continued in the development and evolution of a global research agenda on volunteering for sustainable development, recently discussed in Bonn (UNV, Forum, CSD, 2015) and prior to that in Nairobi (UNV and IFRC, 2015) and Washington (UNV and Peace Corps, 2015). Aligning Forum's collective research and action with this global research agenda is important in order to maximise synergies. Five research priorities were described in the report of the research symposium held in Bonn:

- A. Useful theoretical frameworks to understand and explain the relationships between volunteering and development;
- B. Locally-informed methods, tools and processes to understand the scale, scope and contribution of volunteering to global sustainable development goals;
- C. Conditions for an enabling environment under which volunteering for development can thrive at all levels;
- D. Contextual factors that should be considered when researching volunteering for development;
- E. The need for an inclusive process to implement and evolve the global research agenda on volunteering for development.

This section thus highlights a series of collective research and action possibilities that Forum members could consider to contribute to the three broad objectives outlined in the UNSG's plan of action to integrate volunteering in the next decade and align with the

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<sup>32</sup> The suggestion that there is value in collective reporting is not new. It was actually raised in a 2007 Forum discussion paper by Plewes and Stuart in a section called 'Collective research and learning', where it suggested "This paper points to a number of issues where sector-wide research and analysis makes sense. How many international volunteers are there? Is there concentration in certain sectors or regions? What are examples of volunteer co-operation agencies coordinating their work with other types of development actors, and with government, communities and businesses to tackle development problems?"

priorities outlined in the global research agenda.

**Engaging returned volunteers.** One promising area of work for Forum members is in working with returned volunteers. It is worth highlighting that many volunteers engaged in volunteering for development have done other forms of volunteering prior to their volunteering for development work/assignment, and may continue this while on assignment or embark on this or return to this after the volunteering for development assignment.<sup>33</sup> This volunteer effort often goes unnoticed by IVCOs except when it comes up as a demonstration of motivation and commitment in the recruitment process. Most IVCOs also have some sort of returned volunteer program that encourages ‘returned volunteers’ to share their first hand global understanding with family and community or even national legislators. Indeed, the contribution of returned volunteers was highlighted by Cliff Allum in his 2008 paper, *Measuring volunteering in civic engagement*.

There is an opportunity for IVCOs to strengthen their systematic work on the SDGs by tapping into the continuity returned volunteers provide as bridges, often without a conscious thought but an inner drive to volunteer. Information and evidence in this regard has been developed by Forum members and others, for example a REARK Australian report in 1997, or Institute for Volunteer Research’s 2008 *The Impact of Returned International Volunteers on the UK* or Comhlámh’s excellent ‘curriculum’ developed for IVCOs “to support the learning journey from international volunteering to active citizenship” (Comhlámh, 2015). The Comhlámh resource is particularly interesting in this discussion because it was produced by a group of 7 EU-based organisations working with returned international volunteers across Europe: GVC Italia (Italy), Alianza por la Solidaridad (Spain), INEX-SDA (Czech Republic), Zavod Volontariat (Slovenia), Volonteupe (UK/Europe), Deineta (Lithuania) and Comhlámh (Ireland).

The universal focus of the SDGs provides a perfect platform for IVCOs to also measure the contributions of returned international volunteers to development. The targets set out in SDG Goal 17 on partnerships is an obvious place to highlight the synergies between what international volunteers achieve overseas and on return (in both their areas of technical expertise and bringing international partners/institutions together through their brokering). It also highlights the value of incorporating the overlaps of collective measurement with diverse volunteer groups, levels and activities.

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<sup>33</sup> Note, however, that this reality may show that with a transition from MDGs to universal SDGs that a holistic sense of development in a globalised world would always have seen volunteering for development as happening in volunteers’ domestic context as much as any other place they go (Devereux, 2010). This is obviously part of the civil society and global citizenship angles on IVCO action that Plewes and Stuart (2007) highlighted.

**Strengthen calls by volunteer groups to be included in national development planning and help them achieve pro-volunteering legislative and policy goals for an enabling environment.** As countries align their development plans to the post-2015 development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals, Forum members can carry out activities that encourage the support of volunteerism by governments, civil society and the private sector, and improve the ability of volunteers to contribute to the achievement of development aims. IVCOs, working together at the national level, can collectively strengthen the voice of local groups to be included in government-led design and enacting of policies addressing the achievement of all of the SDGs. One possibility would be to support a toolkit the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group has been discussing developing, to help organisations at the local level advocate with their governments to include volunteers in their national implementation plans and help improve conditions for an enabling environment under which volunteering for development (V4D) can thrive. This same toolkit could include information to help measurement efforts as well. These efforts are supported in the UNSG's report, which states "Governments, volunteer-involving organizations, civil society and the private sector should develop enabling policies and strategies for diverse volunteer opportunities and invest in inclusive volunteer schemes" (UNGA, 2015, para. 100a).

Within this context, one of the five priorities for the Global Research Agenda adopted in Bonn calls for research that would improve conditions for an enabling environment under which volunteering for development can thrive at all levels. "Clarity and consensus are needed on the specific elements of enabling environments that allow volunteering to thrive (e.g. political, educational, cultural, social, economic, legal)" (UNV, Forum, CSD, 2015). Forum members might collaborate at the national level to support local groups in the research and development of legislative and policy goals that strengthen enabling environments, and work with local partners to pursue their adoption, and use their status as a transnational civil society organisation to share knowledge of best practices in multiple contexts. This latter point will help to achieve action item 101c in the UNSG report on *Integrating volunteering in the next decade*, "Volunteer-involving organizations should contribute to an enabling environment for volunteering and civic engagement by sharing good practices to scale up opportunities for people to volunteer, building new capacity for well-managed programmes and identifying the community needs, assets and knowledge required to achieve transformational change."

**Action research, reflective practice and developing resources for encouraging the integration of volunteering with the SDGs.** Volunteering for development draws on a long tradition of experiential learning where both volunteers and those they work with learn from their work and their contexts, bringing together, for example, cultural and technical aspects

as well as indigenous knowledge and wisdom (Devereux, 2008; Australian Volunteers International, 2011). This has been in a sense the precursor to more recent forms of action research like the VSO Valuing Volunteering endeavour (IDS and VSO, 2015). The VSO Valuing Volunteering research has been a rare and explicit effort to both do this rigorously and document it carefully.

Unlike other sectors or interest groups, volunteer groups have rarely tried to produce evidence-based guidelines to guide those seeking to integrate volunteering and development or volunteering and sustainable development in practical ways. There are now many excellent examples of how practitioners can integrate environment and development together while also documenting and improving practice (UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative, 2015; Raworth, 2012; UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative, 2011).

**A volunteering for the SDGs manual** could use the data collected (and encourage more parallel data collection through action research) to produce practical guidelines for how to better use volunteerism as a means of implementation for the SDGs at local, national and global levels. This resource manual could be formulated as a specific project for Forum or a donor to support. The ‘child friendly’ version of the SDGs could be an inspiring example of a user friendly publication that, in an accessible and attractive manner, helps people apply and measure volunteering for development or sustainable development (Global Movement for Children of Latin America and Caribbean, 2014).

***Encourage implementation of the ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work and facilitate partnerships with government agencies to implement it.*** As stated in the report from the Bonn research symposium, “As a starting point, basic descriptive information is needed on the numbers and types of volunteers in different settings. It is not yet clear who these volunteers are, where they are located, and what they are doing” (UNV, Forum, CSD, 2015). The UNSG’s report similarly recommends that “National statistical offices should employ existing methods, such as national household surveys, to assess the contribution of volunteerism and at the same time create new tools to monitor progress and new methods to better capture the qualitative contributions of volunteering”, citing the standards outlined in the *ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*. To generate this information, we therefore strongly suggest that Forum members leverage their global perspectives and relationships with partner/host governments to encourage the implementation of the ILO Manual as part of their efforts to support the capacity of local organisations and the development of local volunteer infrastructures.

Further, Forum members could help to identify organisations to partner with national

statistics agencies in the development of these data. Indeed, ILO Manual implementation efforts have proven to be most successful where civil society groups have partnered with government statistics agencies.

This effort is especially critical in the next few years as the ILO plans to carry out additional testing of the ILO Manual questionnaire and issue global endorsement of the approach for all countries within the next two or three years. This opens the door for volunteer groups to become engaged in the development of the final recommendations and subsequent efforts to encourage national governments to incorporate these guidelines into their national household surveys.

**Questions for the conference:** *Do these opportunities for collective action and research resonate with Forum members? How do they align with their current activities (especially at the national level) and donor priorities?*

## J. Methods for Reporting Information

The collection of data is only useful when they are reported, promoted and used by those with a stake in the potential outcomes of these efforts. In this sense, it would be ideal that the data collection and reporting be mainstreamed into everyday practice of volunteer groups. Therefore, it is important that the method of collecting and reporting be discussed in advance of the production of the data, because it will ultimately drive the approach taken for the collection of the information itself. Further discussion is therefore needed to address the following questions: Will the reporting be physical productions? Or will it be available via an interactive website that allows users to manipulate the data or dig deeper into qualitative narratives? Is a periodic or international-level report envisioned? Or are national- or regional-level reports expected?

Further, who will be responsible for collecting, cleaning, mapping, aggregating and drafting the reports? Possibilities for housing or coordinating the project, and the prospective costs and resources required, need careful consideration by Forum members.

In thinking about reporting this information, at least at a collective level, the following considerations should be made:

- A. The method of reporting should be informed by the target audiences and outcomes Forum members seek to engage with this information.

- B. Varied versions of the reporting might be considered, depending on the weighting given to both international- and national-level objectives and in order to highlight common ground.
- C. One objective of collective reporting can be to raise awareness among volunteers and volunteer groups themselves about the importance of the work they are doing, and the options for more collaborative interaction. Given this, considerations should be made about other materials that might be included in these reports (such as standards of practice). For example, there could be opportunities to compare national and international versions of existing standards of practice to highlight common ground or consider a combined version, e.g. drawing on the national Volunteering Australia standard with the Comhlámh IVCO standard (Volunteering Australia, 2015; Comhlámh, 2014).
- D. Thought should be given to how and when this information might be conveyed to the High-level Political Forum on behalf of volunteer groups. We are aware that there are ongoing discussions about the future of the Post-2015 Volunteering Working Group. If this group is maintained, then reporting procedures should be coordinated with this body. Further, efforts by other groups to report on the contributions of volunteers to the HLPF (UNV, IAVE, ILO/JHU, etc.) should also be coordinated by the P2015VWG.
- E. Reporting language should be simple, free of jargon, text-minimal and figure/chart-heavy to ensure its accessibility to multiple stakeholders, including other volunteer groups, policy makers at the national level, UN bodies, other UN Major Groups and named stakeholders, and the business community.
- F. Video and mixed-media methods and multiple languages for accessible reporting of information should be used in conjunction with formal reporting, to encourage interaction with and use of data collected by volunteers and organisations from high levels to the grassroots.

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## List of Acronyms

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Forum      | International Forum for Volunteering in Development                                  |
| HLPF       | High-level Political Forum   |
| IAEG-SDGs  | Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators             |
| IAVE       | International Association for Volunteer Effort                                       |
| ILO        | International Labour Organization  |
| ILO Manual | International Labour Organization <i>Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work</i> |
| IVCO       | International volunteer cooperation organisation                                     |
| MDGs       | Millennium Development Goals   |
| SDGs       | Sustainable Development Goals  |
| VIO        | Volunteer involving organisation   |
| UNSG       | United Nations Secretary-General   |
| UNV        | United Nations Volunteers  |
| V4SDGs     | Volunteerism for the SDGs  |

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