

Australian Red Cross

International Volunteering Program Pilot:
Evaluation Report

Executive Summary

Prepared by Jessica Stevens with the Impact, Design and Evidence (IDE) team for the Volunteering Directorate

November 2018

Acronyms

ARC	Australian Red Cross
AVID	Australian Volunteers for International Development
AYAD	Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development
BOCA	Branch Organisational Capacity Assessment
CCST	Country Cluster Support Team
CRG	Critical Reference Group
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDE	Impact Design and Evidence Team
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IP	International Programs
IPLG	International Programs Leadership Group
IVP	International Volunteer Program
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCAC	Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification
ODE	Office of Development Effectiveness
PGI	Protection, Gender and Inclusion
RCRC	Red Cross Red Crescent Movement
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNV	United Nations Volunteers

Acknowledgements

There are many who contributed to this evaluation, in particular, the authors of this report would like to acknowledge and thank the National Societies and Australian Red Cross staff and volunteers who participated in the evaluation, but in particular, those who took part in the interview and survey process. Without their contributions and willingness to share their views and experience with us, this evaluation would not have been possible. We also thank Paul Daly for providing us with a rich source of data and insights. Finally, thanks to the International Programs staff their support of the evaluation during the research and report writing periods, and the Critical Reference Group for providing their technical expertise and oversight.

1. Executive Summary

Introduction

This evaluation began towards the end of the pilot of the International Volunteer Program (IVP). The focus of this evaluation was the relevance of and appropriateness of the IVP model. The evaluation looked at the design and coordination of the IVP and assesses if the pilot has succeeded in its intention and if the model is valid. The report highlights factors that are seen to support or constrain the program, and point to possible changes for the next phase. Finally, the evaluation looks at the financial viability of the program and tests to see if there is potential for the model to be self-sustaining financially.

Relevance

The report found the model was valid and unique within the movement. The shorter assignment length has allowed for discrete pieces of work to be done at the direction of National Societies. The addition of the option for online volunteering has opened up flexibility for volunteers who may not have otherwise been able to volunteer. While it may still take some time for National Societies to feel comfortable with the platform and online volunteering the initial results show that there is momentum and promise for the program to be successful. The peer to peer aspect of the model has allowed information, expertise and skills sharing within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and further supported locally led humanitarian action.

Effectiveness

The report found while the program was able to operate there could have been more time dedicated to ironing out processes prior to recruiting volunteers. It would be prudent to review pre-departure information and continue working closely with National Societies on assignment development to ensure alignment with strategic commitments. The program has been able to recruit volunteers who have been diverse, with the addition of peer to peer assignments and online volunteering being an enabler for this. Throughout the program 27 out of 33 assignments listed were filled. Of the filled assignments, 19 were online, and 8 in-country. Thirteen (13) of the 27 were peer to peer assignments within the Red Cross Red Crescent movement, with six assignments being group assignments. In total 200 volunteer users registered on the platform and 34 were successful in securing either an individual assignment or a group assignment. National Societies who received volunteers were, Australian Red Cross; Cook Islands Red Cross; IFRC Asia Pacific – Malaysia; IFRC CCST Pacific – Fiji; IFRC North Pacific sub-office on behalf of Micronesia; Marshall Islands and Palau Red Cross Societies; IFRC PMO – Cox's Bazar Response; Mongolia Red Cross Society; Nepal Red Cross; Philippine Red Cross; Vanuatu Red Cross Society; Vietnam Red Cross Society.

Sustainability

The report found that National Societies have a continuing demand for volunteers. While National Societies acknowledged that online volunteering has greater flexibility and financial viability the report found there was still a preference for in country assignments. Further the report found that National Societies need some guidance and support from the Program Coordinator in order to be able to scope well defined volunteer opportunities which highlights the long ramp up time and level of investment that is required to develop the 'network effect'. The report also found that the original self-sustaining funding model that utilised revenue from International Humanitarian Training services and subscription fees from corporates and Universities was unrealistic. Therefore, the evaluation recommends a new business model is developed with consideration of product market fit and alternative sources of funding or revenue.

Appropriateness

The report found the program was aligned to localisation principles by supporting locally led humanitarian action and National Society strengthening, and was closely aligned to recommendations outlined in *'Going Local, Achieving a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the pacific.'* The peer to peer aspect of the IVP, including treating Australian Red Cross as a volunteer receiving National Society has allowed for an

open dialogue between all National Societies. All participating National Societies involved have been able to dictate the terms and management of this program through their involvement in the IVP Reference Group.

Recommendations

- Localisation should remain at the forefront as a priority of the program.
- The International Volunteer Program to continue with a program coordinator to support National Societies to operationalise the platform, recruit volunteers to the platform and support National Societies where needed.
- Support is provided to National Societies on how volunteers are used (mapping to OCAC and BOCA)
- National Societies are given more time to adapt to having volunteers online
- The platform is trialled in a country where internet is poor. Adjustments can be made to the platform so it can be used throughout the movement.
- The platform is shared with a wider variety of potential volunteers (through corporate partnerships and universities)
- Assignment mapping to be undertaken to understand what volunteers and National Societies want to ensure a pool of people can be used to fit National Society needs.
- National Societies could be given more guidance and support in selecting the best local champion to be the IVP volunteering focal point.
- A Business model canvass to be developed with detailed consideration of product/market fit and alternative sources of funding and revenue.