Singapore International Volunteers on a Words on Wheels volunteer trip to Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Developing the Global Standard for Volunteering for Development

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forum

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The purpose of this paper

This framing paper, prepared for IVCO 2019, looks at the development of the Global Standard for Volunteering for Development (the Standard). The paper tracks the process from the moment in early 2017 when members of the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum) noted they were in favour of Forum 'adopting a set of V4D [volunteering for development] standards'. The process is tracked up to early August 2019 when a representative stakeholder group (including non-Forum members) commented on a third draft of the Standard and the Forum Board considered how the Standard might be integrated into the network.

As of June 2019 there were 34 Forum members, many of whom supported and fed into the development of the Standard through surveys, workshops, comments, donating resources or as members of sub-groups[1]. This paper summarises the expertise they have offered to the Standard which will be launched at IVCO 2019. There are also many non-Forum members who can benefit from the Standard – national as well as international organisations that work with volunteers but may not define themselves as being part of volunteering for development. Some of these organisations have been part of the working groups and Forum hopes that all of them will read this paper and the Standard to understand and reap the benefits for their organisations, their volunteers and especially for the communities with whom they work.

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[1] Appendix 2 lists organisations and countries that contributed to the process.

Quality standards

> **"The value of a standard is in its contribution to development and progress, to professionalism, to efficiency and effectiveness."**
>
> — Workshop participant,
> Guinea 2018

A quality standard is a set of principles and norms which help organisations understand and meet requirements for a quality service, program or product. Such standards can be incentives or inspiration or both. Quality standards, particularly when they are accompanied by some form of assurance process, are positive for performance, positive for people and positive for perception.

Alongside strengthening accountability (primarily to communities but also to donors) quality has been an important theme over the last 20 years of development and humanitarian practice. These years have seen an increase in the internal and external pressures on organisations to improve their performance and the impact they have. During this period there has therefore been the development and widespread use of global quality standards for civil society, for humanitarian practice, for safeguarding children, for people management, for accountability and for evaluation as well as other areas. Global non-profit federations have developed standards, as have national networks of development or volunteer involving organisations (VIOs).

Why this focus on quality and why through standards? Any non-profit organisation delivering a program or service requires a formal or informal 'licence to operate', an acceptance from a beneficiary or target group, a host government or host community that the organisation has something to offer. Some examples: their work helps attain a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG); it contributes to a Voluntary National Review (VNR); it is part of a community's broader development needs; it does no harm. Adherence to a recognised and participatively-developed standard can assist in gaining that licence to operate as well as reassuring staff, volunteers and donors that the organisation is committed to good quality work and committed to continuous improvement.

Standards also encourage and enable learning as a key contributor to achieving and sustaining quality. They are often run by networks, and organisations join networks to share and learn, to give and receive support, and to improve practice. A standard helps an organisation to understand where it can improve, and networks are well placed to support the areas where the organisation needs to improve.

> Key Forum support includes the training and knowledge management support needed to identify and disseminate good practice. Participants in almost every workshop identified the key role that standards can play to promote learning between Volunteer Cooperation Agencies, local partners and national organizations at various scales' (Forum, 2019).

Such an emphasis on learning is critical because the content of a standard and whether organisations meet that standard is not the only measure of its success. A standard's existence can simply encourage a focus on quality, can persuade organisations to think about quality for the first time, and can motivate them to look at traditional practices and policies even without referring to the content. A standard can dictate donor funding policies, thereby forcing improvement or change in organisational practice.

The need for a standard for volunteering for development

> [This standard] will address the problem that there is no globally recognised set of good practice standards that focus on volunteering for development, or on good practice for volunteer-involving organisations. [It] will lead to more responsible and impactful volunteering and to greater confidence from potential volunteers and the wider public in organisations that adhere to the standards (Forum LSWG, 2018a).[2]

Volunteering for development organisations join Forum to benefit from its four aims: to share information; to research key contemporary issues; to develop good practice; and to enhance cooperation and support among its members (Forum strategic plan 2016-2020). Offering the volunteering for development sector a quality standard, as it was conceived during the Forum strategy review in 2015, helps to deliver each of these benefits. Importantly it is a mechanism that will contribute to ensuring impactful and responsible behaviours and outcomes. It will help position volunteering for development in relation to international volunteering, emphasising an approach to volunteering which is values-based, rights-based and community-focussed.

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[2] This framework proposed the design principles for the Standard. LSWG is the acronym for the Forum Leading Standards Working Group.

The need for a quality standard was created by external pressures as well. Ensuring that volunteering is seen as positively contributing to the SDGs was one of these:

> An important consideration in constructing the standards has been to design them in such a way that they encourage take-up, that they are relevant to all volunteering involving organisations whatever their size and wherever they are located in the world, and that most importantly, they clearly help organisations contribute towards delivery of the sustainable development goals (Philip Goodwin, Chief Executive, VSO and Forum Board member).

Another pressure was competition experienced by non-profits from commercial volunteering organisations and from the increasing number of organisations offering to strengthen the capacity of national, local and community organisations:

> Given the deep-seated needs and expectations of many of the communities within which they work, how [volunteering for development organisations] conduct themselves and their work is key to maintaining confidence and the success of the development trying to be achieved (Stephen Goodman, Chief Executive Officer of Volunteer Service Abroad and Forum Board member, talking of the Pacific region).

Volunteering for development organisations need to convince a number of stakeholders that they deserve support, differentiating themselves from other organisations that may make less credible claims about the volunteering they offer, or are less aware of the harm they might do. This is a reason for the Standard helping to define responsible and impactful volunteering.

> "[The purpose is to] unify, harmonise and establish essential norms and principles to inform and guide practitioners. Setting minimum quality performance, fostering excellence."
>
> — Peru workshop, November 2018

Three principles illustrate this rationale:

- **Communities** have a right to be heard, to be the leaders in their own development. Meeting the Standard can embed this in the practice of volunteering for development organisations, for example from consulting on the development of a project, through ensuring that the highest standards of selection, preparation and management provide the most appropriate volunteers, on to delivering projects that do no harm and deliver measurable impact for the community.

- **Donors** have an interest in the Standard. One Forum member receiving funding for a volunteering for development program reports that their donor looks forward to the 'way in which the Standard will position the contribution of volunteering towards impact of programs designed for the poorest and most marginalised and therefore towards the achievement of the SDGs'. The donor also expects grantees to place increasing emphasis on duty of care and safeguarding.

- Finally, **volunteers** have an increasingly informed choice about where and how to give their time. A standard with a strong emphasis on development needs and on managing and supporting volunteers can attract them to volunteering for development organisations.

National standards already exist in some countries, more often related to development or to volunteering than to volunteering for development. Other national standards may be very specific, for example about marketing, fundraising or safeguarding. All these promote quality and support learning but the purpose may be specific to that country. For example the standards may guide access to funding from the national government, clarify legal as well as good practice responsibilities or facilitate an organisation's registration as a non-profit. There will be some content overlap with the Standard but its advantages include a unique focus on volunteering for development, consistent standards for all partners wherever they are based, a focus on the SDGs and a focus on the centrality of the community with whom the volunteer is working rather than on internal organisational capacity.

The journey towards the Standard

The work on the Standard has formed an integral part of Forum's current strategy (2016-2020) which includes the following desired outcome: 'Enhanced body of IV4D systems, standards, innovations and good practices for sharing among members, partners, alliances and other volunteer involving groups.' Aside from this outcome the Standard is seen by the Forum Board and Executive Coordinator as contributing to all four of Forum's strategic objectives.

> **"The creation of such a standard presents an opportunity for organisations to discuss and align good practice, draw from specific expertise, share learning and agree on what constitutes impactful and responsible volunteering."**
>
> — Hassanali and O'Brien (2018, p 7)

A survey of Forum members in January 2017 concluded that 'adopting a code of V4D guiding principles' was the best way to 'embed V4D in Forum'. So in April 2017 the Forum Board agreed that a Forum Leading Standards Working Group (LSWG) would be formed to 'develop a set of [Volunteering for Development] standards to complement the Forum Charter (stage one) and to establish a process for take up/adoption by Forum members and associate

members (stage two)' (Forum LSWG, 2017). Later 'and the wider sector' was added to the last sentence. In October IVCO 2017 endorsed the idea in the Seoul Call to Action where participants committed to 'advancing good practice in the sector through the development of leading standards in volunteering for development'.

By February 2018 the Forum LSWG had developed a plan. A desk review, a survey and workshops were to take place throughout 2018. The development of the Standard would take place in the first half of 2019, informed by this consultation and research. The launch of the Standard was planned for IVCO 2019 in Kigali, Rwanda. There was clarity about the audience to be consulted: 'This consultation will meaningfully engage with current and past volunteers, volunteer involving organisations, primary actors, host organisations and other constituents'.

The aims of the wider consultation process were:

- 'What should be the scope and content of the Global Volunteering for Development (V4D) Standard?

- How should the standard be implemented and managed?

- How can the standard be used to promote learning and enhance good practice in volunteer-involving organisations?' (Forum LSWG, 2018b)

First, design principles[3] were agreed (February 2018), setting out 'the type of standard we wanted, what its purpose would be, and its scope'. They derived from earlier consultations (at IVCOs for example) that took 'inspiration from the values and principles articulated in the Forum Charter' and guided the early development of the Standard (Forum LSWG, 2018b).

Next, a global survey was carried out in 2018, bringing in 488 responses from 66 countries. A productive consultative session on the Standard and its possible content was held at IVCO 2018 in Montréal. A project manager was hired to oversee the process leading up to IVCO 2019 and a comprehensive desk review (Hassanali and O'Brien, 2018) was circulated in July 2018.[4]

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[3] See Appendix 3.

[4] The purposes of the desk review were to: '(a) map sector standards and standard-related documents within the volunteering for development sector […]; (b) highlight relevant case studies to understand the processes used to develop, implement, manage and improve practice through standards; (c) map VSO standards, standard-related documents and documents at an operational level within VSO; (d) identify common themes and areas that a Global Volunteering for Development Standard can address; (e) through learning gained from the desk review, propose how best to approach creating the Global Volunteering for Development Standard' (Hassanali and O'Brien, 2018)

In late 2018/early 2019 facilitated workshops brought together 144 people in nine countries, representing organisations at a national level who were responsible for hosting and receiving volunteers.[5]

> **"Workshop participants shared their excitement for the value the standard would bring to their organisations in establishing good practice and creating a tool for learning and improvement."**
>
> — Rahim Hassanali, Volunteering leadership project manager (VSO) and Coordinator of the Forum LSWG

The consultation has been global and has included national and international volunteers, sending organisations, host organisations, community representatives and many others. Forum non-members have also played prominent roles in the consultations, including commercial organisations, youth volunteer organisations, governments and networks. In January 2019 it was agreed that the Standard should be offered to non-Forum members as a way of Forum demonstrating leadership in the sector and seeking to influence those outside its current membership.

The process of developing the Standard has been open and dynamic. The consultation phase was tiered with, for example, the workshops being asked questions unresolved by the survey. Relevant stakeholders' views have been sought, considered and incorporated where possible.

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[5] See Appendix 2 for organisations involved in structures created to support the development of the Standard and for countries involved in the consultative workshops and surveys.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STANDARD: 2015-2022 TIMELINE	
Period	**Narrative**
2015	The notion of a quality standard is conceived during Forum's strategy review.
January 2017	A survey of Forum members indicates that they are in favour of Forum adopting a set of volunteering for development standards.
April 2017	The Forum Board agrees that (1) a Forum Leading Standards Working Group (LSWG) develop a set of volunteering for development standards to complement the Forum Charter and (2) a process be established to encourage the adoption of the Standard by Forum members and associate.
October 2017	IVCO 2017 endorses the idea in the Seoul Call to Action where participants commit to 'advancing good practice in the sector through the development of leading standards in volunteering for development'.
November 2017	The Forum LSWG terms of reference are produced.
February 2018	The Forum LSWG proposes to the Forum Board the design principles and a consultation plan for the Standard in a paper entitled 'Agreed framework for leading standards for volunteering for development'.
June 2018	A global survey to consult on the Standard design principles produces 488 responses from 66 countries (see Appendix 3).
July 2018	The project manager (Rahim Hassanali) circulates a comprehensive desk review: 'Global volunteering for development standards desk review'.
October 2018	A consultative session on the Standard and its content is held at IVCO 2018.
November 2018-January 2019	Consultative workshops take place with national organisations in nine countries involving 144 people.
January 2019	It is agreed that the Standard should be offered to non-Forum members as a way of Forum demonstrating leadership and widening its influence in the sector.
February-March 2019	Forum LSWG sub-groups (including Forum members and non-members) are convened around each of the four Standard themes.
April 2019	A technical writer is contracted to support the process.
July 2019	Three draft definitions of volunteering for development are presented for comment to the Forum LSWG and Reference Group.
August 2019	The Forum Board makes decisions about how the Standard will be managed and how it will be implemented among Forum members. These will be presented at IVCO 2019.
October 2019	The Standard is launched at IVCO 2019 and options presented for its management.
Post-IVCO 2019	The Forum Board will review options for the management of the Standard.
	A full report of the consultation will be produced by the end of 2019.
	Material will be uploaded to Forum's new website and/or Forum Hive to support organisations aligning themselves with the Standard.
	A form of brand recognition will be developed for the Standard.
2021-2022	A review will be conducted of the Standard and its implementation.

Creating the Standard

The following are the most significant outcomes or conclusions from the consultations and have all contributed to the Standard as it will be presented at IVCO 2019.

Key outcomes from the survey[6]

- The Standard should hold volunteer involving organisations accountable for responsible development with positive impact.

- The Standard should promote and encourage good practice and learning in the sector.

- The Standard should focus at the community level – on the people, communities and organisations who work with the volunteers.

- The Standard should support the volunteering sector to measure and communicate contributions to the SDGs.

- The Standard should have the ambition to cover all forms of volunteering for development.[7]

- There should be a mixed structure for compliance with the Standard (e.g. not all mandatory).

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[6] These outcomes are drawn from the Forum global survey conducted in 2018 which yielded 488 responses from 66 countries (Appendix 3).

[7] While the Standard clearly applies to national and international volunteering, it also has applicability across other volunteering modalities including business and e-volunteering. Although application may vary, the principles will not.

Key outcomes from the desk review[8]

• There is no agreed definition of volunteering for development although transparency is a common commitment of volunteering for development organisations.

• The program cycle and the volunteer journey will be the most valuable areas for the Standard to cover.

• Standards related to volunteering for development need to be applied by both volunteer sending organisations and organisations that host volunteers.

• All standards studied (those most relevant to Forum members) have a form of compliance or accreditation structure.

Key outcomes from the workshops

The workshops contributed many thoughts on the content of the main sections of the Standard, namely volunteer management; duty of care; designing and delivering projects; and the definition of volunteering for development. Workshop participants also wanted to ensure that partners and host organisations be treated equally to sending organisations with the Standard helping to strengthen their mutual capacity.

Implications for the Standard

The conclusions and recommendations from the consultation phase have not always been consistent, nor did they always agree with the design principles. As one example, design principle 8 suggests a modular approach to the Standard on the basis that 'not all modules will be relevant to all organisations'. This view has changed: only by meeting the Standard as a whole will a volunteering for development organisation show its commitment to responsible and impactful volunteering. Nevertheless core key actions have been identified that will enable emerging organisations to make a start on improving their performance without having to meet the whole Standard.

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[8] Many of the conclusions mirror those from the survey and are not repeated here.

As a second example, design principle 10 states:

> **The standard will cover all forms of volunteering for development – local, national and international – as well as youth, corporate and other forms of volunteering that contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

The survey respondents agreed. The workshops did not agree, however, on whether the Standard should apply to local volunteers (working in their community and unremunerated) as well as to national and international volunteers receiving allowances and incentives, nor on whether both youth volunteers and skilled volunteers should be included.

The Standard was developed following the design principle.

The content of the Standard

Developing the content of the Standard has been a participatory process. Nevertheless several important decisions were made by the Forum Board or the Forum LSWG. The first is that the Standard, with its focus on defining and supporting volunteering for development, would only cover **operational work.** Design principle 4 defines this as 'covering the entire development program cycle from program development through operational delivery and evaluation and learning'. This means that organisational capacity (such as governance, staff management, ethical fundraising or purchasing etc.) is not part of the Standard.

Values and principles guiding the Standard

From amongst the principles and actions contained in the Forum Charter, the following have guided the content of the Standard.

• The communities that volunteers work with are the most appropriate people to make decisions about their own development.

In addition, organisations that adhere to the Standard will:

• Contribute experience, expertise and support to hosting organisations, institutions and communities in their own efforts to genuinely participate in the decision making and implementing of ideas that directly affect their lives and the future of their communities.

• Ensure that volunteers have the appropriate personal qualities, motivation and skills and are appropriately prepared to make the most effective contribution during their placement.

• Provide appropriate support and adequate preparation to volunteers and host partners to ensure the successful completion and sustainability of their joint undertakings.

• Reflect, evaluate and share good practice and key learnings as an integral part of our organisational advancement.

— **Extract from Forum Charter**

Second, there is a strong focus on the **community** in the Standard with the vast majority of Forum members preferring this.[9] Of course not all volunteering for development volunteers are placed at the community level – they may be in a government office or working for a network like an advocacy campaign

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[9] 92% of survey respondents reported that standards should focus at the community level (question 8) (WUSC, 2019).

or chamber of commerce – but the Standard should still be relevant to organisations who place such volunteers.

Third, it was decided that this would be a **standard** and not a guideline or a series of good practices.

This informs what is included in the Standard, building on the national workshops and the expertise of the sub-groups. Eventually every key action in the Standard will be able to be carried out by all volunteering for development organisations, whether international or national, sending or hosting.

Four themes

The Forum Charter[10], the design principles and the desk review[11] helped to define what is included in the Standard. It covers:

• Designing and delivering projects

• Duty of care

• Measuring impact

• Volunteer management.

The theme on measuring impact was a later addition (September 2018), separated out from the projects theme because it is a key and recurring theme in the Forum strategy and in Forum's policy work (at the UN for example). Some important issues cut across these themes: the Standard promotes a rights-based approach to development, for example, and emphasises 'do no harm' in relation to community members and volunteers.

In order to develop the detailed content of these four themes, members and non-members were invited to join sub-groups[12] which first convened in February/March 2019. A technical writer with experience of volunteering as well as standards development was engaged in April to support the process. The input from the nine national workshops was strong but Forum acknowledges there was a lack of representation from the Global South in this later part of the Standard's development until participants used their networks to

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[10] See box on page 11 for values and principles that guided the content of the Standard.

[11] 'Most organisations' standards documents outline a set of organisational commitments, from which stems more detailed guidance covering the areas of Duty of Care, Volunteer Management and Volunteering for Development Programming' (Hassanali and O'Brien, 2018 p. 13).

[12] See Appendix 2 for composition of the sub-groups.

invite new organisations into the process. Even after this effort greater representation would have been ideal.

The desk review[13] and the workshops[14] contributed content for three of the themes and the survey was also useful for the volunteer management theme. Each of the sub-groups subdivided their themes – for example,' volunteer management' follows the volunteer journey from 'recruitment and selection' to 'debriefing, recognition and ongoing engagement' – and experts in each of these areas met virtually to decide on content. They drew on their own experiences and from existing standards relevant to the theme.[15] By the time the Standard reaches delegates at IVCO 2019 the content will have been through three drafts with experts and a consultation process involving the Forum LSWG and the wider Reference Group.

It is probable that the final version of the Standard presented at IVCO 2019 will not suit everyone. For example, there are areas where more organisations may be at the starting line than having actually started the journey to meet the Standard. For example, the focus on involving the organisations may be beyond where some organisations currently stand. The sharing of responsibilities between sending and

hosting organisations, as outlined in the Standard, may not reflect the reality of some existing partnerships; and national volunteer sending organisations may see elements of the Standard as exclusive to international sending/receiving.

The many contributors to the writing of Standard have been aware of these and other possible tensions and have looked carefully at the language used, the definitions (of 'partner' for example) and the 'do-ability' of each key action.[16] Above all, the sub-groups have been guided by the standards to which organisations practising volunteering for development should be aspiring.

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[13] On 'duty of care' for example: 'It appears from our review of standards and standard-related documentation that there is more emphasis on VIOs' duty of care towards volunteers than towards the people that volunteers work with' (Hassanali and O'Brien, 2018 p. 18). The recommendation was to focus the Standard on communities as well as volunteers. On 'programs' the review identified the following priorities: partnership, local ownership and participation, sustainability, youth participation, and the environment (ibid, p. 24).

[14] On 'volunteer management' for example: 'There was significant emphasis in many of the workshops on providing 'appropriate training to volunteers at each step of the volunteer journey. Participants also noted the importance of standard policies and guides, and information management and coherent databases to support volunteer management' (Forum, 2019).

[15] Examples of these experiences and standards include the Comhlámh Code of good practice for volunteer sending agencies, the International Citizen Service (ICS) Quality assurance handbook, Volunteering Australia national standards, Volunteer Canada standards, and EISF handbooks. The global nature of the Standard, along with its definition (e.g. it doesn't cover all the internal capacity and policy areas required for certification by EU Aid Volunteers) means this connects to other relevant standards without duplicating them. Organisations having to follow national standards should find both overlap and stretch in the Standard.

[16] For nearly every key action in the Standard the sub-groups have suggested good practice and guidance (from other standards or their own organisations' practice) which will help organisations understand, learn about and apply the Standard.

Defining volunteering for development

In addition to the four themes, the Standard contains definitions of volunteering for development as well as for impactful volunteering and responsible volunteering. Importantly the Standard has been constructed so that an organisation that meets the Standard will find that it is delivering impactful and responsible volunteering for development.

Historically there has been debate about the definition of volunteering for development. A number of organisations felt that no definition will stand the test of time and that any definition will be too broad to be of value for branding and communication. For the current purpose (to guide the Standard) draft definitions were developed based on material collected by the workshops and the surveys.

Neither the workshops nor the 2018 survey offered a single easy definition and the survey responses focus heavily on the volunteers' role, perhaps reflecting the number of volunteers responding. The workshops summary document (Forum, 2019) notes that 'In general, however, it is important to underscore that few workshops were able to identify a common view of what constitutes Volunteering for Development'.

Nevertheless there was enough common ground for three draft definitions to be presented for comment to the Forum LSWG and reference group in mid-July 2019. The definitions presented in Kigali in October 2019 will have incorporated any comments.

Management of the Standard

> "[There is a need to] ensure clarity, transparency and understanding of the global standard, as well as visibility and communication".
>
> — Peru workshop,
>   November 2018

Any standard needs to be managed. All global standards in the development and humanitarian sector have some form of secretariat;[17] many national standards are owned by national networks.[18]

The disadvantage of having a standard – a standard which is needed and which has enthusiastic

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[17] Examples include the CHS (Core Humanitarian Standard) Alliance; Keeping Children Safe; the Global Standard for CSO (civil society organisations) Accountability.

[18] Examples (not necessarily volunteer related) include Comhlámh in Ireland; ACFID's (Australian Council for International Development) Code of Conduct; the Philippine Council for NGO Certification; Viwango in Kenya (focusing on certification).

and interested supporters – is the cost of resources (people, promotion and ongoing revision). One major advantage of spending those resources is that someone has a key and identifiable role in promoting the value of the standard to members and to non-members.

First, they can coordinate learning and sharing by: populating a website with material shared by members; organising regional/national workshops and global communities of practice; delivering case studies; and carrying out research.[19] Second, they can coordinate communication and promotion to other stakeholders (for example volunteers and donors). Third, they are an essential support for any self-assessment or verification process agreed on by the network, and would coordinate the first review of the Standard.[20]

An early Forum Board decision for the Standard was that learning would take precedence over compliance on the grounds that members gain more from networks where someone is facilitating this learning for them. The Forum Board will be reviewing options for the management of the Standard and will present these at IVCO 2019.

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[19] As the desk review notes: 'Another similarity is that each standard is accompanied by a set of resources to support its application' (Hassanali and O'Brien, 2018 p. 47).

[20] As recognised by design principle 12: 'There will also be a mechanism to support organisations to graduate through the levels of compliance. This could take the form of peer support, a bank of shared resources, or an entity or organisation that will provide these services' (Appendix 3).

Implementation of the Standard

Some standards are made available as reference points for organisations to use if they wish; other standards (ISO for example) are mandatory if the service provider or goods supplier needs customers. There has been discussion about whether meeting the Standard is to be mandatory or optional.

In the January 2017 survey it was preferred that 'Forum should promote and not impose V4D standards' through 'a process to build a culture of good practices instead of pushing for the acceptance of mandatory standards' (Forum, 2017). In the 2018 survey 58% of respondents reported that they did want compulsory standards with external compliance monitoring, while a larger cohort (68%) said that compulsory aspects mixed with some optional guidance is important. Even in the design principles there was an assumption that there would be some form of compliance[21] and the desk review supported this.[22] In the 2018 survey 94% of respondents thought the standards should 'hold volunteer involving organisations accountable for responsible and positively impactful development' (WUSC, 2019).

The board's position is clear: 'The Forum Board agreed that a learning approach should be taken for the … standards, as opposed to a compliance approach' (Forum, 2018). This position is based on the need for inclusivity, namely to ensure that Forum members and other organisations of all sizes and levels of sophistication can benefit from the Standard.

The traditional options for implementing a standard include:

• Self-assessment. An organisation will ask its key stakeholders (particularly communities, volunteers and staff) about its performance against the standard and will check that the required policies and processes are in place, understood and widely practised. Self-assessment can produce scores which would allow those implementing the Standard to compare themselves to their peers and to their own baseline, and identify common weaknesses which can perhaps be addressed by training. Donors in other sectors have shown considerable interest in seeing how their grantees improve their scores over time.

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[21] Design principle 9: 'Over time, organisations will gradually implement practice in line with the standard, and move from self-assessment of "core" or "essential" elements to more demanding levels of compliance.' Also see design principle 11 (Appendix 3).

[22] 'Each body responsible for managing their standard has different ways of verifying to what extent the standard is being met. Each of the standards featured in these case studies has an element of self-assessment, allowing organisations to internally assess and reflect on their systems and practice against a set standard' (Hassanali and O'Brien, 2018 p. 47).

- Verification. In essence this involves independent assessors checking the evidence provided for a self-assessment. Communities, volunteers and staff would be asked questions; policies and practices would be studied and tested.

- Certification is a pass/fail awarded by external assessors.

In August the Forum Board agreed that self-assessment would be prioritised, with approaches to verification being considered after a year or so. At IVCO 2019 it will be proposed that the Standard be linked to the Forum Charter which Forum members sign up to. It may be necessary to amend the Forum Charter to incorporate top-level commitments to each of the Standard's four themes.

There will be some form of brand recognition (such as 'Committed to the Standard') which will demonstrate an organisation's commitment to and progress against the Standard to its stakeholders, particularly to donors, volunteers and communities. The form of this recognition will developed in the next stage of work.

What next?

The Standard will be launched at IVCO 2019 and the Forum Board's recommended approach to its management and implementation will be presented. Following IVCO 2019 a number of steps are envisaged to put the Standard into practice.

- Organisations that champion volunteering for development will be encouraged to step forward and agree to implement the Standard. They may be motivated by the confidence that they have everything in place or by a desire to see if they have weaknesses that need to be addressed. Alternatively they may feel that a statement of commitment to the Standard will help them access donor or other funding or increase volunteer recruitment and community satisfaction.

- The Forum Board will determine how to encourage organisations that are not Forum members, but who work with volunteering for development, to engage with the Standard as a tool for learning and practice.

- These experiences will feed into a review of the Standard, its content and its implementation in 2021-2022.[23]

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[23] The desk review (Hassanali and O'Brien, 2018) envisages this continued process being managed by Forum members: 'Create a working group of relevant stakeholders to support the evolution of the standard after it is developed and launched. It is expected that this will evolve from the current Leading Standards Working Group, and will include many of the current members of this group' (Ibid).

- Material will be uploaded to Forum's new website and/or Forum Hive to support organisations working with the Standard. As the workshops summary notes: 'Key Forum support includes the training and knowledge management support needed to identify and disseminate good practice' (Forum, 2019). The materials offered by Forum members and others will include policies, good practice case studies or evaluations, research papers and more. They will be organised on the website to match the layout of the Standard and will hopefully link with other such websites currently being developed.

- The Forum Basic Data Measurement Survey was conducted across Forum members in 2019 and the intention is to run it annually. The survey will provide a minimum set of data, initially numbers of volunteers and similar information. Over time the data could increase in complexity to address the collective impact of volunteering for development on the SDGs. The Standard's work on impact measurement will contribute to this.

- Leading up to the United Nations Global Technical Meeting on Volunteering (GTM2020) there are opportunities for Forum members to engage with national situational analyses covering the scale, scope and impact of volunteerism for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Standard can contribute to this work.

- A full report on the consultation process will be produced by the end of 2019.

IVCO 2019 represents a critical point in the evolution of the Standard. Trusting in the breadth and depth of the consultation and the competence and experience of the many colleagues who have contributed to the Standard, the Forum Board looks forward to strengthening the volunteering for development sector through its implementation.

Through practice and learning the Standard will continue to evolve in response to the demand for quality services, assessment and development impact. Hopefully it will also serve to increase the diversity of VIOs in the volunteering for development space.

Questions for discussion

1. How can this Standard support volunteering at a national level, for example through the development of national volunteering standards in countries where these do not yet exist, or by harmonising with or influencing the development of Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)?[24]

2. How can this Standard assist Forum members and others to lobby for increased funding for volunteering for development?[25]

3. How do we measure the impact of the Standard? What else should Forum be studying during the roll-out phase?

4. How can the Standard be used to show the value that volunteering adds in projects aimed at achieving the SDGs, compared to projects that do not involve volunteers?

5. How does Forum support the commercial volunteering sector to adopt volunteering for development and the Standard?

6. Does your organisation have good practice material you would like to share with other Forum members? The first two days of IVCO 2019 will provide the opportunity to do so.

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[24] Questions from the workshops summary (Forum, 2019).

[25] A question from the workshops summary (Ibid).

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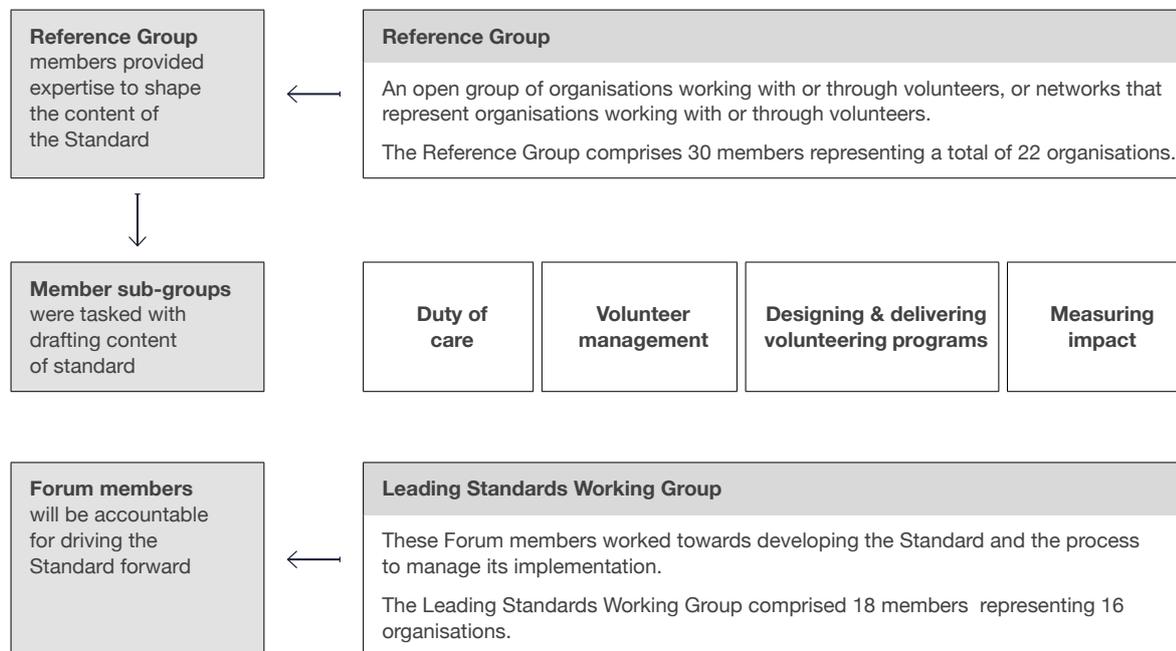Volunteer Canada. (2017). 'CCVI: The Canadian code for volunteer involvement'. Ottawa. Available at https://volunteer.ca/vdemo/ResearchAndResources_DOCS/Volunteer_Canada_Canadian_Code_for_Volunteer_Involvement_2017.pdf

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Appendix 1
Structure of Forum Leading Standard working groups

**Restructure of group working towards developing the Global Standard
for Volunteering for Development**

Reference Group members provided expertise to shape the content of the Standard	**Reference Group** An open group of organisations working with or through volunteers, or networks that represent organisations working with or through volunteers. The Reference Group comprises 30 members representing a total of 22 organisations.

Duty of care	Volunteer management	Designing & delivering volunteering programs	Measuring impact

Member sub-groups were tasked with drafting content of standard

Forum members will be accountable for driving the Standard forward	**Leading Standards Working Group** These Forum members worked towards developing the Standard and the process to manage its implementation. The Leading Standards Working Group comprised 18 members representing 16 organisations.

Appendix 2
Participants in the Standard development process

Several hundred people have been involved in the consultation for the Standard. They were based in over 80 countries. The information below lists organisations that participated in various structures that worked towards the development of the Standard and the countries in which they are based; high-level outcomes from the 2018 survey; the scope of the desk review; and the numbers of participants who participated in the workshops that were held in nine countries.

Forum leading standards working group (Forum LSWG)

Comhlámh	**Ireland**
Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA)	**New Zealand**
VSO	**UK**
AVI	**Australia**
Australian Red Cross (ARC)	**Australia**
Cuso International	**Canada**
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH	**Germany**
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	**Japan**
Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontario (FOCSIV)	**Italy**
Nepal Friendship Society	**Nepal**
Raleigh International	**UK**
Unité	**Switzerland**
United Nations Volunteers program (UNV)	**Germany/UN**
World University Service of Canada (WUSC)	**Canada**

Reference group (not members of Forum)

Better Care Network	UK
European Volunteer Centre (CEV)	Belgium
Habitat for Humanity	Philippines
Humanitarian Academy	UK
Johns Hopkins University	USA
Volunteer Involving Organizations Society (VIO Society)	Kenya
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Switzerland
Philippine Coalition on Volunteerism	Philippines
Projects Abroad	UK
Pencils of Promise	USA
Hope and Homes for Children	UK
ALTO Global Consulting	Australia
Rubaroo	India
Lumos	UK
Cambodia Volunteer Network	Cambodia
Transform Alliance Africa	Kenya
Gambia Volunteers	Gambia
Engineers Without Borders Canada	Canada
Vine Trust	UK
UNICEF	USA/UN

Design and delivery of projects sub-group

VSO (Lead)	South Africa
Restless Development / ReThink Orphanages	UK
Vine Trust	UK
Projects Abroad	UK
ALTO Global Consulting	Australia
Engineers Without Borders Canada	Canada
Cuso International	Canada

Duty of care sub-group

Raleigh International (Lead)	**UK**
Cuso International	**Canada**
Lumos / ReThink Orphanages	**UK**
Hope and Homes for Children	**UK**
ALTO Global Consulting	**Australia**
Engineers Without Borders Canada	**Canada**
Transform Alliance Africa	**Kenya**
Comhlámh	**Ireland**
Projects Abroad	**UK**
Lumos	**UK**
ECPAT International	**Thailand**

Volunteer management sub-group

Cuso International (Lead)	**Canada**
Gambia Volunteers	**Gambia**
Restless Development	**UK**
European Volunteer Centre (CEV)	**Belgium**
Raleigh International	**UK**
Cambodia Volunteer Network	**Cambodia**

Impact measurement sub-group

World University Service of Canada (WUSC)	**Canada**
World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists	**UK**
Engineers Without Borders Canada	**Canada**
Unité	**Switzerland**
Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies	**USA**
Projects Abroad	**UK**
VSO	**UK**

2018 Survey respondents

The survey was completed by 488 stakeholders in 66 countries. As is shown below, the countries with the highest response rate were France, Togo, Bangladesh and Canada, making up over one third of the responses received. Most respondents were volunteers or staff from organisations managing volunteering programmes.

COUNTRIES WITH HIGHEST RESPONSE RATES		
Countries	No. of people	%
France	57	11.7
Togo	45	9.2
Bangladesh	41	8.4
Canada	36	7.4

VOUNTEER RESPONSES	
Types of volunteer	%
National	14.64
International	37.05
Corporate	3.5

RESPONSES FROM STAFF	
Types of staff	%
Staff who manage volunteering programs	24.53
Staff from host organisations	37.05

Desk review

The desk review mapped over 100 standards and standards-related documents, and also showcased the development and management of three well known standards through case studies.

Global workshops

The global workshops were held in nine countries. Participants were mostly host organisation staff and community representatives as shown below.

Country	No. of workshop participants
Peru	28
Tanzania	23
Canada	17
Guinea	17
Rwanda	14
Philippines	13
UK	12
Fiji	10
India	10

Appendix 3
The design principles

The design principles were developed in early 2018. They were checked during the consultation and guided the development of the Standard. The importance of some principles has changed following the consultation.

'The principles will be underpinned and take inspiration from the values and principles articulated in the Forum Charter.

1. The standard will reflect responsible and positively impactful volunteering for development. The standard will be adopted and implemented by volunteer-involving organisations globally who choose to take the standard up, with the purpose of promoting and encouraging good practice, learning and improvement in these organisations, and of promoting a common understanding and definition of Volunteering for Development (V4D).

2. The standard will improve the ability of prospective volunteers to make an informed decision about Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) by providing them with a set standard that encapsulates best practice in volunteer work, as well as information on individual Volunteer Involving Organisations' adherence to the standards.

3. The standards should ultimately support the volunteering sector to measure and communicate our contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and enhance recognition of the value and impact of V4D.

4. The standard will be comprehensive, covering the entire development program cycle from program development through operational delivery and evaluation and learning. They will align with development discourses reflected in the Busan declaration, the SDGs and ensuring we do no harm.

5. The standard will also address every aspect of the 'volunteer journey' from a prospective candidate's first contact with a volunteer-involving organisation through recruitment, pre-departure preparation, placement, resettlement and continued engagement in action for development.

6. The standard will also address the 'journey' of the people, communities and organisations with whom our organisations engage and volunteers work.

7. The standard will have a strong focus on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. The standard will comprehensively cover issues of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults along with issues of sexual exploitation and abuse in host communities.

8. To achieve this, the standard will be modular, and adherence to the standards will be measured on a module-by-module basis. Possible modules are role development, partnership; recruitment and selection; training; safety and security; safeguarding, health; monitoring, reporting, learning and evaluation. Not all modules will be relevant to all organisations.

9. There will be multiple levels of compliance with individual modules, and with the standard as a whole. Organisations will be encouraged and supported to graduate through the levels. Over time, organisations will gradually implement practice in line with the standard, and move from self-assessment of 'core' or 'essential' elements to more demanding levels of compliance.

10. The standard will cover all forms of volunteering for development - local, national and international, as well as youth, corporate and other forms of volunteering that contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

11. There will be a mechanism for measuring organisations' adherence to the standard. This could take the form of self-audit, peer evaluation, external evaluation, some combination of these or something else entirely. Forum will play a leadership role in implementation and accreditation, possibly in collaboration with other VIO networks.

12. There will also be a mechanism to support organisations to graduate through the levels of compliance. This could take the form of peer support, a bank of shared resources, or an entity or organisation that will provide these services.

13. In developing the standard, we will draw on existing standards within our organisations and across them, for example the Comhlámh Code of Good Practice, as well as standards from beyond the V4D sector such as the Core Humanitarian Standard and the UK NCVO's PQASSO tool.

14. The standard should be simple, flexible, and evolving. We will need a mechanism to oversee the future evolution of the standard.' (Forum LSWG, 2018a)