

Evaluation Report Title: Evaluation of the International Citizen Service Phase 1 Report

Response to Evaluation Report (overarching narrative)

Overall the findings of the review were positive reflecting the success of ICS in delivering high quality volunteering placements, offering value for money and learning as the programme progresses.

The conclusion stated that:

The ICS programme is being implemented successfully with good progress having been made in all aspects of scheme delivery... There is evidence that both UK and in-country volunteers have benefited in the short-term from their experience and phase 2 will provide an opportunity to explore more longer-term change (including active citizenship behaviour). There is also evidence of a positive effect on delivery agencies, partners and host communities, including increased recognition of the role that young people can play in development.

It is recognised that the consortium approach continues to add value to the programme, allowing for flexibility, different approaches and learning. Over the course of the first phase a number of new agencies have been sub-contracted to provide placements and this has further enhanced the ICS product. The role of the central management 'hub' is critical to programme delivery ensuring quality standards are met and sharing good practice while also empowering agencies to make decisions about what will work best in each project context.

The focus on providing high quality placements overseas is the cornerstone of the schemes success and the qualitative and quantitative evidence in this report highlight this. Much effort has gone into the monitoring and evaluation framework for projects and this continues to be developed and refined. It will be important to continue to build the capacity of partners both in the UK and overseas to ensure that robust and reliable data is available for continuous improvement.

Recruitment has continued to be successful with over three applications for every place, ensuring selection remains competitive and the cohort of volunteers appropriately diverse.

Initial findings from Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) surveys and other survey work are encouraging with clear evidence emerging that the programme is making a significant impact on both UK and in-country volunteers. The testing of these results against the identified control group in the next phase of the evaluation will be important.

There remain challenges that are picked up in the recommendations below. It will be important, in particular, to ensure that lessons continue to be learnt regarding the use of in-country volunteers to work alongside UK volunteers. In many cases this has worked well and has been a highlight for a number of returning volunteers. In other cases, however, concerns have been raised over the respective roles and treatment of volunteers from the UK and overseas.

The next phase of the evaluation will focus on outcome level indicators and it will be important to include in greater detail the role of in-country volunteers and also to refer to the seven ICS quality principles.

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Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	If “Accepted”, Action plan for Implementation or if “Rejected”, Reason for Rejection
<p>Volunteer learning should include explanation of the theory of change at programme and project levels. This will help volunteers to better understand their role and the outcomes they are working towards. This learning should be facilitated by team leaders during the placement; this will require the theory of change to be included in team leader training although it is understood that the Hub is already developing materials to ensure that this is the case.</p>	Accepted	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Programme Implementation Manual (PIM) requires the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to be covered at pre-placement and in-Country Orientation (ICO) training courses, including for team leaders • Agency training sessions have been developed to strengthen volunteer understanding and ownership of M&E, including activities around project level theories of change • The hub plans to observe and assess pre departure and in country trainings in already place for year ahead, these have been coordinated with the external evaluator to avoid duplication • Volunteer learning case study visit has been scheduled by the Hub for the end of April (to Malawi) • A global workshop on volunteer learning (as well as supervision and support) has been scheduled for all delivery agencies in June <p>PLANNED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ICS hub will develop central volunteer learning resources on theory of change and M&E. This will build on the best of current agency practice (for both team leaders and general volunteers) • Learning about M&E will be integrated into the broader, structured volunteer learning programme building on the new Active Citizenship Pack (ACP) and learning journal resources distributed from January 2014 • Year three volunteer learning case study visits to be scheduled • The ICs hub will build on the relationship with Open University outlined in the ICS Entrepreneur pilot proposal to maximise any benefit for the full ICS programme around extending our ambition around support for volunteer learning more generally
<p>Following on from the above, volunteers should be made</p>	Accepted	<p>In addition to the points on volunteer training on M&E (above):</p>

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<p>aware of their role in relation to other volunteer cycles in order to understand how they contribute to the bigger picture. Volunteers should also be provided with an opportunity to access updates on project progress after they leave so that they can see how their work has been taken forward and helped to make a difference.</p>		<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new version of the PIM requires all agencies to explain the ICS volunteer role in development at pre-departure training and in-country training. • Agencies have audited training cycles to avoid unnecessary duplications • Sharing of team debrief reports and handover notes to future teams is a requirement for all country programmes • There will be an increased focus on sharing development outcomes as part of the annual reporting process scheduled in for May/June 2014 • There will be an ongoing focus on measuring project impact built into M&E tools (particularly the project debrief reports) – accumulative over year three of the programme <p>PLANNED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop central guidance on sharing of project updates with alumni • Develop central guidance on involving alumni with projects in the medium to longer term (already happening in the short term with much of the work on action at home but can be consolidated further)
<p>Where agencies are interested in expanding the opportunities available for people with disabilities this should continue to be encouraged, although recognition should also be given to the increased costs associated with working with this group and access to the central fund set aside for this purpose should continue to be provided where required.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At quarterly review meetings and in quarterly reports, agencies are invited to comment on what has worked well in relation to supporting young people with disabilities. This learning is also shared at Delivery Group Meetings • The ICS hub will continue to promote the use of the Access Fund by agencies • The ICS Hub will progress the recruitment of a Diversity and Inclusion Officer <p>PLANNED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ICS Hub will oversee the development of case studies on the various models for inclusion of volunteers with disability that exist to date • The ICS hub will look into the cost models in detail for the development of new proposals for a future ICS programme

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<p>A work plan should be developed to formalise and plan the strategic inputs expected from any non-delivery partners going forward. Similarly, if non-delivery partners are to continue to have recruitment targets they should be required to set out a plan for achieving this to be approved and reviewed by the Hub at appropriate intervals.</p>	<p>Partly Accepted</p>	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ICS Hub has established regular quarterly review meetings with all consortium members, including non-delivery agencies, and it is through these reviews that the hub established the performance of the party. These link into the overall ICS hub work planning processes. • The ICS Hub is responsive to planning and aligning strategic inputs, and has assessed and acted on under-delivery. <p>PLANNED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use lessons learned from relationships with Catch 22, Islamic Relief and other partners to develop a plan of work for non-delivery partners in future
<p>Agencies should review the level of resources allocated to the customer care process in order to minimise drop-out, including providing clear lines of support and communication so that volunteers know who they can speak to if issues or questions arise.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies are now identifying named staff for each potential volunteers to contact with any questions <p>PLANNED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS hub will develop an engagement strategy to improve retention of young people who apply significantly in advance of planned departure (i.e. more than six months)
<p>Agencies should ensure that in-country volunteers receive the training and support they require to play a full part in the programme, and also that they are given a role and responsibilities which are comparable/equal to those of the UK volunteers.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ICS hub facilitated a workshop on 'working with ICVs' in November 2013, leading to sharing of new resources, strengthening of PIM requirements and a clarification of practical definitions of ICVs • Good practice guidelines have been strengthened following country visits by ICs hub staff (to Uganda, India, Bolivia, South Africa) that compared different approaches to working with ICVs and made specific recommendations to strengthen the equity of the ICS experience • ICV models remain a core part of quarterly review meetings between the Hub and each agency
<p>In-country training should focus on providing placement specific skills and information, rather than training on more</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The requirement for agencies to do this has been strengthened in the new

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<p>generic topics, to ensure that volunteers feel comfortable with the role they are being asked to perform.</p>		<p>version of the PIM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action will be monitored through quarterly reporting with growing evidence of strengthening practice across agencies from Q8 onwards • There will be an increased focus on practical skills being incorporated into team leader and supervisor training, as well as incorporation into partnership development work e.g. local trainers identified; community facilitator role established • Monitoring of training has been incorporated into the country visit schedule for the ICS Hub in the year ahead, this will be coordinated with the external evaluator to avoid duplication
<p>There is still a need to manage volunteer expectations pre-departure, particularly by being clear on the role of pre-departure training and the content of the training/orientation they can expect to receive in-country and by sharing the practical day-to-day experiences of returned volunteers of their time in-country.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The latest version of the PIM makes the presence of alumni at pre-placement training a requirement to help manage expectations based on the reality of a placement.
<p>Agencies should consider how to mitigate issues caused by the relatively short length of placements, including maximising time in country, planning for multiple cycles and potential for handover periods (e.g. for team leaders).</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of working with partners on project planning that focuses on the integration of multiple ICS teams into a longer term project has been stressed as part of ongoing work on planning, monitoring and learning with all agencies • Extended team leader placements (for 6 or 9 months) are now increasingly the norm, although costs of handover periods may be prohibitive and logistical obstacles are likely to mean handover periods will remain hard to standardise. Work with in country team leaders is going some way to mitigating this, as well as emphasis on completeness of written briefings which are increasingly thorough. • It is now recommended that team leaders arrive a minimum of two weeks before other volunteers as standard practice, to strengthen preparation and handover <p>PLANNED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the learning from phase two of the evaluation

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<p>Dialogue should be maintained with project partners in-country to identify any funding issues related to the delivery of ICS activity and explore the implications of this for their role in the programme.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have quarterly reviews of expenditure and are working with agencies to enable them to ensure funding is prioritised and allocated accordingly. <p>PLANNED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance to be further strengthened and circulated to both the Programme Planning and Finance working groups • The ICS hub will lead a review of volunteer and team leader understanding of budgets available for activities, will seek to improve transparency and also review how volunteers work with local partners to ensure funds are available and used appropriately • The ICS hub will explore possibility of making advanced funding available to partners so that there no delays on implementing project activity. • Additional support will be made available for volunteers and local partners to develop budget management skills through projects
<p>Agencies should consider whether there is scope to group or bring forward placement travel bookings in order to realise savings and also consider rail travel cost implications when scheduling the timing of UK based events. The Hub should continue to explore opportunities for joint procurement and share their findings with agencies.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The procurement review conducted for travel resulted in some agencies changing travel providers. • The review also indicated substantial gains would be limited given the variety of operating models (team size, frequency of departure, number of countries etc) and also with the increased staff cost of employing procurement specialists • The ICS hub have brokered a deal with MASTA clinics for volunteer vaccinations, with savings of between 5% and 15%
<p>The evaluation team should maintain contact with the M&E function in the Hub to ensure that this process remains on track, particularly while efforts continue to recruit a dedicated M&E manager.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>COMPLETED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular two-monthly meetings have been established to report on progress. Other meetings do take place more on an ad-hoc basis. • An M&E manager for the ICS hub has been recruited <p>PLANNED ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications of the ICS Entrepreneur pilot with relation to the terms of reference for external evaluation to be confirmed as soon as possible.