For Whose Benefit?
Host Community Perceptions of the Role of Short-term International Volunteers in Development.

A Case Study of BREADS
(Bangalore Rural Education and Development Society)
Karnataka, India.

By

Jane Mellett

A thesis submitted to the Kimmage Development Studies Centre, Dublin, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MA in Development Studies.

Kimmage Development Studies Centre, Dublin. 2010
# Table of Contents

## Chapter One – Introduction

1.1 Introduction ................................................................. 1  
1.2 Rationale .................................................................. 2  
1.3 Key Concepts ............................................................... 2  
1.4 Background ................................................................ 5  
1.5 Terminology ................................................................ 8  
1.6 Outline of Research questions ................................. 9  
1.7 Outline of chapters .................................................... 9  
1.8 Conclusion .................................................................. 10

## Chapter Two – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction ................................................................. 11  
2.2 The Short-Term International Volunteer ...................... 11  
2.3 Development and Short Term International Volunteering 15  
2.4 Who Benefits? The Role of Volunteers in Development ... 20  
2.5 Relationships ............................................................... 24  
2.5.1 The Volunteer and the Host Community .................. 24  
2.5.2 The Sending Organisation and the Host Community ... 26  
2.6 Responsible Volunteering ........................................... 27  
2.6.1 Comhlámh’s Volunteer Charter ............................... 28  
2.6.2 BREADS Volunteer Policy .................................... 29  
2.7 Conclusion .................................................................. 30

## Chapter Three - Methodology

3.1 Introduction ................................................................. 31  
3.2 Research Approach .................................................... 31  
3.3 Research Methods ..................................................... 31  
3.4 Data Collection Methods ............................................ 34  
3.5 Limitations ................................................................ 35  
3.6 Ethical Issues ............................................................. 37
Chapter Four – Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introduction
4.2 The Short-Term International Volunteer
4.3 Perceptions of the Role of Volunteers in Development
  4.3.1 Effect on the Host Community
  4.3.2 Effect on the Volunteer
4.4 Relationships
  4.4.1 The Volunteer and the Host Community
  4.4.2 The Sending Organisation and the Host Community
4.5 Changes
4.6 Other relevant comments
4.7 Conclusion

Chapter Five

5.1 Introduction
5.2 The Short-term International Volunteer
5.3 Perceptions of the role of volunteers in development
  5.3.1 Effect on the host community
  5.3.2 Effect on the volunteer
5.4 Relationships
  5.4.1 The Volunteer and the Host Community
  5.4.2 The Sending Organisation and the Host Community
  5.4.2.1 Training
  5.4.2.2 Funding
  5.4.2.3 Who decides?
5.5 Conclusion
# Chapter Six

6.1 Introduction 70
6.2 The Role of Short-Term International Volunteers in Development 70
6.2.1 Strengths 70
6.2.2 Issues and Challenges 71
6.3 Overall Conclusion 72
6.4 Recommendations 74
6.5 Areas for Further Research 75

# Appendices

# Bibliography
Declaration

I, Jane Mellett, do declare that this research is my original work and has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have endeavoured to reference correctly all literature and sources used in this work. Finally I recognise that the onus is on me to ensure that this work is fully compliant with the KDSC academic honesty policy contained in the KDSC Student Handbook.

Signed:  
Date:

Word Count: [24, 570] excluding appendices and bibliography
“If you’ve come to help me,
you’re wasting your time…
But if you’ve come because
your liberation is bound with mine,
then let us go together.”

(Aboriginal Woman quoted in Ehrichs 2000, p.9)
This thesis is dedicated to the children of
Savio Bhavan Child Labour Rehabilitation Centre,
Don Bosco Tumkur, Karnataka,
India.

Photo by Sara Marks
Acronyms

BJP   Bharatiya Janata Party
BOVA  Bosco Volunteer Action
BREADS Bangalore Rural Education and Development Society
CBI   Central Bureau of Intelligence (Karnataka)
CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation
FBO   Faith Based Organisation
GOI   Government of India
ILO   International Labour Office
IMF   International Monetary Fund
NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation
RVA   Returned Volunteer Action
SCI   Service Civil International
UN    United Nations
UNDP  United Nations Development Plan
UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
UNV   United Nations Volunteers
VSO   Voluntary Services Overseas
WB    World Bank
Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the contributions of a number of people who I would like to thank:

- To my supervisor, Eilish Dillon whose patience, support and guidance was invaluable. Thank you for continuously challenging and encouraging me. Thank you also to Eimear Burke for her contributions to this study.
- To the research participants: the staff, students and children of the projects of BREADS, Karnataka, India. Thank you for once again welcoming me into your communities and sharing your experiences.
- Thank you to the Salesian Community, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, Ireland for their support of this research.
- To BOVA, especially James Trewby, thank you for creating a programme that offers a genuine space for a ‘pedagogy of the non-oppressed’.
- To the staff of Kimmage DSC, for challenging my world-view to the core. A special thank you to Anne Kinsella and Patrick Marren, for keeping our spirits high in the library in moments of despair.
- To the MA class of Kimmage DSC 2009/10. It was an absolute pleasure to be part of such an experienced and diverse group. I will always look back on this year as being a very special one. May God be with you in your work for justice and ‘true progress’ whether it is in Karamoja, Burma or Dublin.
- To my family and friends for their constant support.
- Finally, to the Don Bosco Community of Tumkur, Karnataka, India. Thank you for welcoming me into your family in 2009, for being a constant presence ever since, and for contributing to a personal ‘conscientisation’. Your lives and work are a constant inspiration.
Abstract

Short-term international volunteering is a phenomenon that has grown rapidly in the last ten years with hundreds of organisations now offering opportunities for people to ‘make a difference’ in countries of the Global South. Motivations vary from the self-centric to altruistic and organisations are attracting large numbers who travel overseas to engage in volunteer work. Criticisms of the experience are well documented and accuse volunteers of contributing to a type of ‘poverty tourism’ that reinforces colonial relationships of superiority. They argue that the only people who benefit from such programmes are the volunteers who think they can, and have the right to, meet the ‘needs’ of communities in the Global South. Others see volunteering as an experience capable of causing positive changes in an individual’s values and lifestyle, which will promote international solidarity and raise awareness of global ‘development’ issues. Most, if not all, of the literature is coming from western countries which highlights a gap in existing research into short-term international volunteering: the voice of the host community.

This research aims to hear that voice. What do host communities think about short-term volunteers working in their projects? Who benefits from such an experience? This research was carried out in the projects of BREADS in Karnataka, India who have had an international volunteer programme in operation for the past ten years. I wanted to know if host communities perceive this programme to be a responsible volunteer experience by exploring the perceived motivations of volunteers, their effects on the host community and the relationships which exist between volunteers, sending organisations and host communities. It is the contention of this research that the volunteer programme, as run by BREADS, does offer an example of responsible volunteering, where there is an opportunity for all involved to benefit. In the majority of cases the programme creates relationships, not of superiority, but of solidarity. It contributes to a learning process for all involved and especially to a ‘pedagogy of the non-oppressed’. However, it is not without issues and certain challenges which highlight concerns around the pre-departure training of volunteers and their awareness of the historical and cultural context within which they operate.
Chapter One
Introduction

1.1 Introduction
Over the last ten years short-term volunteering in a so-called underdeveloped country has become a widespread phenomenon. Whether it is taking a gap year between school and university, taking time out from the world of work or once retired, thousands of people leave so-called developed countries every year for the experience of working in countries of the Global South in order to ‘make a difference’. Yet, international volunteering has faced criticism of late (BBC 2007; Bartham 2006; Simpson 2004a) and the debate is ongoing over what has been termed, ‘poverty tourism’. Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) have criticised what they call ‘voluntourism’ as a ‘new colonialism’ and say that projects offered to people are often badly planned and have negative impacts (BBC 2007). One returned volunteer notes that,

Historically middle class boys in Khaki shorts have made their way in the Indian sub-continent. Now their grandsons are doing it with “making a change” in mind, but where their colonialist forbearers stayed in India, the modern generation return to their comfy homes (Bartham 2006, p.1).

Private Eye, 2003 in Simpson 2004b, p. 9

The criticisms of volunteering are well documented, as we will see in chapter two. However most, if not all, of the literature is coming from western countries, where most short-term international volunteers originate. This research aims to hear the voice of the host communities and explore their perceptions of the volunteer experience.
1.2 Rationale

I have had, what was for me, a fortunate experience of volunteering on three different occasions in India over the past ten years. My original motives were altruistic, I wanted to ‘make a difference’ but on reflection I wondered who really benefited from my experiences? Was it myself, from experiencing a diverse and fascinating culture, while feeling good about myself? Or was I contributing to ‘development’, a concept that will be explored in chapter two.

In 2009 I returned to India through an organisation called Bosco Volunteer Action (BOVA), a sending organisation in the UK. It was during my training with BOVA that I was introduced to the concepts of using experiential learning cycles (ELCs) for development education (Fountain 1995; Trewby 2007). Through a cycle of exploration (the volunteer experience abroad), responding (reflection on the experience) and action (continued involvement on return), BOVA argue that while it is the volunteer who mostly benefits from such placements, the experience can also become useful for the sending organisation and the host community (BOVA 2010a).

For me, the question remains as to how the volunteer experience affects the communities that volunteers travel to. What is the host community’s perception of the role of short-term international volunteers in development? When starting this research I wanted to know how beneficial, if at all, the experience is for the host community. Andrew Jones notes that, “continuing demand from overseas organisations for volunteers indicates that they must feel these participants are having a beneficial effect” (2004, p. 56). This is a simple suggestion and highlights a gap in existing research into short-term international volunteering: the voice of the host community.

1.3 Key Concepts

1.3.1 International Volunteering for Development, a Brief History

Volunteering is not a new, uncommon phenomenon. The earliest reference to volunteer work can probably be found on the mosaic floor of a pagan temple of Garni dating back to the first century AD. The inscription reads: “we worked without pay” (CIVICUS et al 2010). Throughout history mutual self-help was vital for the survival of both urban and rural communities (Gillette 1999). However, the spirit of
volunteerism in the development context has its roots in the missionary activities of the colonial era, as do many of the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) of the North (Ehrichs 2000). Religious groups travelled overseas to minister to ‘new found empires’ and to ‘serve those in need’ (Smillie 1995).

International volunteering for development also has its origins in post World War I reconstruction. For example, Service Civil International (SCI) was established in the 1920s when a group of volunteers joined together to rebuild a war-torn village on the French-German border (SCI 2010). In 1934, SCI sent four European volunteers to work in India, after an earthquake occurred there, to help with reconstruction. This team of volunteers spent years living in India and Smillie calls them, “the first non-Church Western volunteers to work in the South” (1995, p.40).

After World War II, there was an increase in people travelling overseas for volunteer work (Ehrichs 2000). Many of today’s northern NGOs grew out of aid operations in post-war Europe such as Oxfam, started in 1942 by volunteers in England to send food to starving children in occupied Greece (Poulton and Harris 1998). These volunteers were to be the ancestors to organisations such as Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) founded in 1957; the US Peace Corps founded in 1961; and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) founded in 1970 (Ehrichs 2000; Gillette 1999).

Emancipation from colonial rule gave birth to volunteer movements throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America as long term volunteering took off in the 1960s. There was a demand for professional expertise to assist with ‘development’. They were paid ‘development workers’ although considered to be volunteers as rates did not correspond with those in their home country (Dóchas 2007). Today non-profit organisations such as VSO and UNV recruit long-term volunteers for development, focusing on extended placements of one-two years.

According to Dóchas (2007) there is a greater demand at present for short-term placements as opposed to a two-year commitment. This has encouraged a new type of organisation in the voluntary sector, typically targeting the 18-35 age groups and aimed at the ‘gap year’ market. Over the last decade the ‘gap year’ has become a recognised and professionalised phenomenon with hundreds of organisations now catering to meet
the demand for those wishing to volunteer (Simpson 2004a). These organisations are both for-profit (such as I-to-I or USIT) and non-profit (such as SUAS or BOVA). They provide short-term placements in a so-called underdeveloped country, which may last from one month to one year. They do not require that volunteers have specific professional qualifications (Cannon and King 2005).

A new term has also emerged in the volunteer sector, that of ‘volunteer tourism’ (Simpson 2004a; Wearing 2001). This usually refers to shorter placements, some lasting as little as two weeks. Wearing (2001, p.1) defines volunteer tourists as those, who volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve “aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment”. Cannon and King (2005) note that short-term international volunteering is defined as any period from one week to one year, thus including volunteer tourists. They recognise that there can be big differences between the experiences of people who volunteer for a few weeks and people who do so for almost 12 months. Yet, there can be enough similarities to warrant their being considered under the same heading. This study is concerned with short-term international volunteers, who will be referred to as volunteers throughout this research.

1.3.2 Host Community
According to Cannon, “host projects or groups are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or community groups in the destination country that receive volunteers” (2005, xii). For the purposes of this dissertation I am using projects of BREADS (Bangalore Rural Education and Development Society), who are based in Karnataka, India, as examples of host communities (see Appendix I).

1.3.3 Perceptions
This work is exploring the host community’s perceptions of volunteers. A basic definition is that a perception is “the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted” (Pearsall et al 2005, p.1306). Axford et al (1997) argue that in all societies people’s perceptions are influenced by culture and individual values, which people learn from society at large. According to Eysenck (1993) what a person
perceives is a result of a relationship between past experiences and interpretation of the same. What the community perceives to have happened and what people say about their experiences are therefore key for this study.

1.3.4 Sending Organisation
Sending organisations are agencies; organisations or commercial companies that arrange volunteer placements in developing countries (Cannon and King 2005). This research involves the host community’s experience of the relationship between them and the sending organisations. All of these organisations are under the umbrella organisation of Don Bosco Youth Net.

1.4 Background
1.4.1 India
India, the world’s largest democracy with a population of 1.16 billion people (World Bank 2010), is a country of juxtapositions. Its complexity lies in its religious, political, social and cultural diversity, as well as in its long history of civilisation (Anheier and Salamon 1997). India is in the midst of an historic transformation emerging as a global power; and is the world’s fourth largest economy in purchasing power parity terms (World Bank 2010).

On the other hand, India has 300 million people living below the poverty line and wide gender, caste, ethnic and regional inequalities. A rapid fall in growth, from 9.7% in 2007 to 6.1% in 2009, has had consequences for the Government of India's eleventh 'Five Year Plan' on development and poverty reduction (ibid; CIA 2010). One quarter of India's city population live in slums and the vast majority of the rural population remain impoverished. A large percentage of the population continue to be influenced by the ancient Hindu caste system, which assigns each person a place in the social hierarchy. Discrimination on the basis of caste is now illegal but such practices have deep cultural roots and are part of every day life in most towns and villages (CIA 2010).
Life expectancy at birth is an average of 66 years with infant mortality per 1,000 live births at 57. Huge improvements have been made in primary school enrolment, which now stands at 90%. Male adult literacy is 73% while female adult literacy is at 48% (CIA 2010). These figures will of course hide disparities.

With an estimated 12.6 million children engaged in hazardous occupations, India has the largest number of child labourers under the age of 14 in the world (UNICEF 2008). Children are subjected to forced labour as factory workers, domestic servants, beggars, and agriculture workers, and have been used as armed combatants by some terrorist groups. India’s government have yet to ratify the International Labour Office's Conventions on preventing child labour (One World 2010). The United Nations states that India is home to the world’s largest population of street children, estimated at 18 million (UNDP 1993).

According to the 2001 census, 80% of Indians are Hindu; 13.4% Muslim; 2.3% Christian; 1.9% Sikh and 1.8% other (CIA 2010). The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, however, some state governments limit this freedom by enacting "anti-conversion" legislation and by not efficiently prosecuting those who attack religious minorities. This is a particular concern in Karnataka where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is in power (UNHCR 2009). It is in this context that BREADS, a Christian Faith-Based Organisation (FBO), operates.

1.4.2 Salesians of Don Bosco
The Salesians are a Catholic religious congregation, founded by Don Bosco (1815-1888) in the late 19th century, to care for young people who were on the streets of Italy during the industrial revolution. Today, the Salesians number over 20,000 and carry on this mission in over 131 countries worldwide (Salesians 2010). They began working in India in 1906 to “serve those in need” and to work “as facilitators for the education and training of youth…especially the poor” (DBIT 2010).

1.4.2.1 Religious Communities & Volunteering
As this case study is part of a worldwide FBO, it is necessary to briefly explain the context within which this organisation operates. Faith based communities live in some way set apart from the rest of society. They are “groups whose members share certain
religious beliefs and who are therefore drawn together and act in a way informed by their common beliefs” (Greany 2007, p.341). In the case of the Salesian congregation, their intention is to imitate the teachings of Jesus Christ by working for justice for the world’s poor and abandoned youth (Salesians 2010).

Therefore, the host communities to which I refer in this study do not conform to the usual geographical understanding of community. Those with the responsibility for projects are members of the Salesian congregation. They live and work together at specific projects in a professional capacity as teachers, social workers, counsellors, administrators and managers of the projects of BREADS (Salesians 2010). Lay people are also employed in these communities and come from nearby towns/villages on a daily basis to work as teachers, carers, counsellors etc. In this context, the volunteer lives and works in this community and volunteers of no faith or of other faiths are accepted on placements on the understanding that they will respect and be sensitive to the faith dimension of the host community (BOVA 2010b). It is important to note that this research is not examining the concept of faith-based volunteering but is using this case study as one example of a host community.

1.4.3 BREADS (Bangalore Rural Education and Development Society)
BREADS is the development office of the Salesians in Bangalore, Karnataka, India. It manages and assists fifty projects in the Indian states of Kerala and Karnataka (see Appendix II). BREADS have established non-profit oriented schools, colleges, training institutes, rehabilitation centres, emergency shelters as well as other community development programmes particularly in rural sectors (BREADS 2010). Their aim is to promote the “education of the poor and provide direct assistance through medical help and other relief programmes irrespective of caste, race, community, religion or social status” (ibid). At any one time they will have 8-10 volunteers placed at specific projects in the region in order to give “people across the globe an opportunity to work in our settings, to gain an experience...[and] through their presence and skills to support the activities of the project” (BREADS’ Volunteer Policy see Appendix III).
1.4.4 Bosco Volunteer Action (BOVA) & Don Bosco Youth Net

BOVA is the sending organisation of the Salesians in the UK. It offers short-term placements for adults to live and work alongside Salesian communities around the world. BOVA considers itself to have taken the criticisms of volunteering seriously and emphasises the volunteer experience as a learning process (BOVA 2010). BOVA’s returned volunteers are encouraged to act as a development education tool in their home countries through involvement in development organisations and active citizenship (BOVA 2010c).

In most European countries and in the United States there are sending organisations similar to BOVA run by the Salesians. These come under the worldwide umbrella organisation of Don Bosco Youth Net. It is from Don Bosco Youth Net that most of the international volunteers with BREADS originate so that in terms of training and support their experiences are similar. For the purposes of this dissertation, Don Bosco Youth Net and BOVA are referred to as the sending organisations. This is relevant in terms of the host community’s perceptions of the relationship between the sending organisation and BREADS.

1.4.5 Comhláth

Comhláth is a member and supporter organisation for anyone interested in social justice, human rights and global development issues in Ireland (Comhláth 2010). In 2006 Comhláth published a ‘Volunteer’s Charter’ in response to growing criticisms of short-term international volunteering. It aims “to set a standard for volunteering in the developing world” and was compiled in consultation with sending organisations, returned volunteers and host communities (ibid). The charter is explored in chapter two in order to suggest criteria for responsible volunteering, where all involved have an opportunity to benefit from this experience.

1.5 Terminology

The terms used in this study, such as ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’ are problematic. The term ‘developed’ suggests an end point – once you reach a certain economic position, then you are ‘developed’. It fails to recognise the continued desire by all populations for improvements, which are not necessarily material goods (Willis
2005). The term ‘underdeveloped’ is considered by some theorists to be crucial as it recognises the concept of being unable to escape from a position of disadvantage because of global inequalities (Frank 1966). For the purposes of this dissertation, I feel that these terms, while problematic, are relevant especially when exploring the relationships involved in these volunteer programmes.

1.6 Outline of Research questions

Overall question: What are the host community’s perceptions of the role of short-term international volunteers in development? In terms of:

1. The short-term international volunteer:
   - Definitions - what is a ‘volunteer’?
   - Motivations

2. The role of the volunteer in development in terms of who benefits:
   - The effects on the host community
   - The effects on the volunteer

3. Relationships:
   - Between the volunteer and the host community.
   - Between the sending organisation and the host community.

4. Does this case study offer an example of responsible volunteering?

1.7 Outline of chapters

Chapter One provides the background information for this research including the historical context of volunteering, an exploration of key terms and concepts and my rationale for undertaking this study. It also introduces the reader to the context of this case study in the projects of BREADS, Karnataka India. Chapter Two presents a review of the relevant literature in terms of the key concepts: the volunteer; development and short-term international volunteering and the role of the volunteer in terms of effects and relationships. The literature review highlights criteria for responsible volunteering in light of the debates noted. Chapter Three outlines the methodologies chosen for data collection, their limitations as well as ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents the findings of the research, which are then analysed in Chapter Five. Overall conclusions and recommendations are made in the final chapter.
1.8 Conclusion

Host community perceptions of the volunteer experience merits research because short-term international volunteering is a phenomenon that has grown rapidly over the last ten years and has received a lot of criticism. While most critics are coming from so-called ‘developed’ countries, very little research has been done on the impacts of these volunteers, from the perspective of the host community. Therefore, this research aims to hear the voice of the host community and their experiences of living and working with short-term international volunteers.
Chapter Two
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction
The debate is ongoing over the phenomenon of short-term international volunteering. In 2002 Michael Palmer published an article on the pros and cons noting that “the experience of volunteering is mixed, at times even disastrous, not because volunteers do not possess the necessary skills but because they are not made aware of what is involved” (Palmer 2002, p. 637). And what is involved? The literature cited in this section shows that there is more at stake than ‘making a difference’ where volunteers are concerned. Short-term international volunteering does not take place in a vacuum. It exists within a particular historical and cultural context, which affects the relationships between the volunteer and their host community (Cannon and King 2005). This chapter explores these debates in current literature with the final section of this chapter exploring criteria for ‘responsible volunteering’.

2.2 The Short-Term International Volunteer
2.2.1 Definitions
There is little consensus as to what a volunteer is although it is generally defined as someone who performs a non-salaried service for the benefit of others (Cnaan et al 1996; Palmer 2002; Simpson 2004b; Wilson and Musick 1997). The term has significant military roots and was first used to refer to enlisted soldiers: “a person who enters military service, not through obligation or as a regular soldier but of one’s own free will” (Cannon and King 2005, p. 10). This implies that a volunteer offers their time to a cause that they consider to be worthwhile, for example, many Irish people participated in the Spanish Civil War to battle against fascism. The international nature of volunteering is far from new, and indeed is part of an established entanglement of idealism, conquest and travel (ibid; Simpson 2004b).

From military origins, philanthropists continued the concept of volunteering providing support for those ‘in need’ where the State was considered to be failing (Lewis 1987; Simpson 2004b). This social influence can still be seen today both at home and abroad
as volunteering has taken on a liberal and youth-centred understanding and it is increasingly seen as a means to learning (Cannon and King 2005).

The UN General Assembly endorsed, as part of the 2001 International Year of Volunteers, the following criteria for volunteering:

- Actions are carried out freely and without coercion
- Financial gain is not the main motivating principle
- There is a beneficiary other than the volunteer (UNV 2010; cf. Devereux, 2008; Dingle et al 2009; Lee 2006).

Cnaan et al (1996) add one other criterion: the formal organisation of the voluntary activity. For example, it is disputed as to whether or not helping a friend or family member could be considered ‘volunteering’ (Dekker and Halman 2003; Dingle et al 2001). Ehrichs (2000, p.2) notes that volunteering involves “doing good for the sake of it not for material reward or even necessarily for recognition or praise”. In this study, volunteers are people who work in a so-called ‘underdeveloped’ country, for no money in return for food and accommodation (BOVA 2010d; cf. Brown 2002; Palmer 2002).

2.2.2 Motivations

The importance of values has generally been neglected in development discourse, according to Korten (1990a), but the values that compel people to volunteer are integral to debates surrounding short-term international volunteering (Ehrichs 2000). Motivations vary but most scholars agree that, irrespective of contextual influences, volunteers are likely to have similar motivations: to give help to others and at the same time derive some personal benefits (Brown 1999; Cannon and King 2005; CIVICUS 2010; Clary et al 1998; Devereux 2008; Palmer 2002). Smillie (1995) points out threads of idealism, altruism, conscience, guilt, shame, and fear related to self-interest.

Meier and Stutzer (2004) note intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for volunteering as volunteers receive an internal reward as a result of their activity such as seeing the utility of their work and intrinsic work enjoyment. The extrinsic motivations involve seeing volunteering as an investment such as skills maturity combined with wanting to ‘make a difference’. Potter (2004, vii) acknowledges that it is not a one-way process:
“It is perfectly reasonable for volunteers to recognise that as well as giving, they themselves gain from the experience”. Employers and universities recognise “the initiative and determination shown in becoming involved and demonstrating an awareness of others and the ability to organise yourself and work as part of a team that the experience will demand” (ibid).

Cannon and King (2005) argue that throughout the varied history of volunteering it has offered access to alternative opportunities, be these travel or work. Volunteers get to know a community at a level that is not permitted to the average tourist. It is a chance to immerse oneself in another culture. Grayson (2006, p.1) sees two “drivers” of volunteerism: the need for some to prove themselves either personally or to their peers:

They find society to be too structured, too predictable and too safe to provide the level of challenge they seek. So they seek it elsewhere, especially in the less stable, less predictable societies found in developing countries. Most return with a more realistic worldview shaped by experience.

Palmer (2002, p. 639) notes that, volunteering abroad has tended to be associated with “narrowing the divide between the industrialised and developing worlds”. While volunteers acknowledge there are disadvantaged people in their own country it is not on a comparable scale to the situations of people in the Global South. The increase in demand for volunteer placements in the last decade is, according to Lough (2008), linked to an increased interest in natural disasters and global crises. The media portrayal of global poverty may be a contributing factor to an increased desire for holidays involving a service component. Singh (2004, p.2) agrees, stating that “mindless hedonism and pleasure seeking are no longer fashionable” when it comes to travelling. It is no longer as simple as ‘backpacking’ for a year; the trend is to ‘do some good’ while you travel; ‘to help’.

2.2.2.1 Helping
Debates on what ultimately causes people’s happiness have been ongoing throughout history. Meier and Stutzer (2004, p. 2) refer to theories which have evolved from Greek philosophy, one being that helping others increases people’s happiness: “the father of modern economics, Adam Smith, also saw helping others as the way to higher well-being: ‘concern for our own happiness recommends to us the virtue of prudence: concern for that of other people (Smith, 1759:385)’”. Meier and Stutzer’s (ibid) study
concludes that people who volunteer in any capacity are more likely to report high life satisfaction than non-volunteers.

However, according to Gronemeyer, (2010, p. 55), while “help” appears to be as innocent as ever, it has long since changed its colours and become an instrument of the perfect “exercise of power” which is “unrecognisable, concealed, supremely inconspicuous”. According to her, the need for help has been diagnosed from without: “Whether someone needs help is no longer decided by the cry, but by some external standard of normality. The person who cries out for help is thereby robbed of his or her autonomy as a crier” (ibid. p.56; cf. Ehrichs 2000).

Gronemeyer (2010) argues that the mere gesture of giving is sufficient these days for it to be characterised as ‘help’ – irrespective of the intention of the giver, the type of gift, or its usefulness to the recipient. This has gone to particular extremes in the case of development aid – military aid which can potentially fuel genocides or food aid which allows global domination for a handful of giant corporations. “Help” is offered for reasons of the “helper’s own national security, for the purposes of maintaining its own prosperity and for the sake of moral obligation” (ibid p.57). Rahnema recommends tough questioning of the self when motivated to ‘help’, such as:

What prompts me to intervene? Is it friendship, compassion, the ‘mask of love’ or an unconscious attempt to increase my power of seduction…and if things do not proceed as I expect them am I ready to face the full consequences of my intervention? (1997, p.397).

Returned Volunteer Action (RVA 1991) argue that our motivations to ‘help’ in countries of the Global South cannot be separated from the existence of racism as they are based on assumptions about the inherent capacities and abilities of people in recipient countries. It is ironic that “those who have materially benefited from underdevelopment [offer] themselves as part of the cure” (RVA 1991, p.6). It is a little like giving to charity, according to Wheeler: “it makes us feel better...We give but we avert our eyes from the real problem. We rarely sacrifice so much as to cause any adverse effect on ourselves” (1993 p. 128).
2.3 Development and Short Term International Volunteering

One of the criticisms of short term international volunteering is that volunteers are not aware of the context within which they operate i.e. ‘development’ (Simpson 2004a). There are many different understandings of what ‘development’ means. It is a loaded and complex word and one that is “doomed to extinction” according to some theorists (Esteva 2010, p1). This section will outline different theories of development and ways of understanding this concept. It will then attempt to locate the volunteer in this context.

2.3.1 Development

The term ‘development’ often refers to “a process of change where the potentialities of an object or organism are released until it reaches its natural, complete, full-fledged form” (Esteva, 2010, p.3). Although a biological concept, it refers to a being reaching its full potential. It is only in the last century that international development theory emerged, rooted in the economic, political and sociological theories of 18th century Europe (Skeleton and Allen 1999; Willis, 2005).

After World War II, western nations wanted to ensure a more peaceful world and stable economic growth. It was during this time that organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) were established as the Marshall Plan channelled aid from the US to Europe (1948-52) to kick start national economies and “reduce the possibilities of European nations ‘succumbing’ to Communism” (Willis 2005, p.37). But it is Truman who is credited with launching the ‘era of development’ in the aftermath of WWII, introducing this concept of structured aid and with it the concept of a world divided round the measures of ‘development’.

I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realise their aspirations for a better life…Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace (Truman’s Inaugural Speech, 1949, quoted in Escobar 1995, p.3).

Truman’s model of development was based on ‘modernisation theory’, which assumes that all nations are on a universal ‘journey of development’ (Sutcliffe 1999). The rise of ‘development’ in the 1950s coincided with the emancipation of many African countries from colonial rule. Therefore scholars argue that ‘development’ needs to be
critiqued on the basis that it is imbued with relations of colonialism and power (RVA 1991; Skeleton and Allen 1999).

Rostow’s ‘Stages of Economic Growth’ followed on from this and claimed that States were at different stages of economic take-off from low productivity to an “age of high mass consumption” (Rostow 1960, p.10). The basis of this theory is that capitalist economic growth demands and produces western style societies. This theory has generated much criticism over time as it is seen as synonymous with colonial perceptions of non-western cultures and value systems as ‘backward’ (Simpson 2004b); a Euro-centric approach, which does not recognise the range of societies in the South and also the needs of local populations (Escobar 1995; Willis 2005). The more contact countries have with western nations the easier it will be for them to achieve modernisation, therefore it sees western societies and cultures as ‘superior’ (Bradshaw and Wallace 1996).

Dependency theorists, such as Andre Günder Frank, disagreed and argued that this process of ‘development’ had produced ‘underdevelopment’ which was generated by the very same historical process which also generated economic development: the development of capitalism” (Frank 1966, p31). Frank argued that developed nations were ‘developed’ at the expense of underdeveloped nations through the exploitation of resources and free market trade. In order ‘to develop’, these countries needed to break free from exploitive relationships with the west (Frank 1966; Willis 2005). This was a welcome voice from the South, focusing on Latin America and calling for alternative development processes through socialism. However, the theory has also been criticised for a continuing focus on ‘replicating Europe’ as the end goal of ‘development’ (Willis, 2005). Both theories see the beneficiaries of development as ‘passive’ and reliant on ‘expert’ knowledge, as Simpson (2004b, p.39) argues:

In the modernisation model the populous do not know what is good for them (in that they need to change social and cultural traditions to the tune of development). While in the dependency model the populous do not know what is bad for them (in that their development is permanently suppressed by structures that are beyond their control).
The Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, argued that attempting to liberate the poor without their participation is to “transform them into masses which can be manipulated” (1970, p.47). Action ‘with’ and not ‘to’ must be achieved through developing a critical awareness of one’s own identity and situation – a conscientisation. Modern theories of development have turned to grassroots development, working with local communities and emphasising “agency, in the sense of peoples’ capacity to effect social change” (Nederveen-Pieterese 1998, p.345; Clark 1991). People should be encouraged to be involved in interventions that effect them and over which they previously had limited control or influence (Max-Neef 1989; Rahman 1993; Cooke and Kothari 2001). Likewise, Amartya Sen (1999) sees the notion of freedom to be central to the concept of development rather than just economic growth. This enhances the ability of people to help themselves and to the influence the world.

“The poor must help themselves,” (Chambers 1983, p.3), not in terms of developing on their own but “neither should it be determined by external actors with external interests, but by their own efforts with support from outside” (Trewby 2007, p.8). Small-scale projects have grown, supported by NGOs, and emphasised basic needs rather than economic structures. Short-term international volunteering, fits into this grassroots rhetoric as it involves volunteers working in highly localised contexts (Simpson 2004b).

Words such as “empowerment” have become central to development policy, which Cornwall (2007, p.472) sees as a fashionable “buzzword”. Yet, for development to take place people need to be empowered. Freire (1970) argued that this empowerment is blocked by the actions of more powerful countries and development interventions themselves can be ‘disempowering’ if they follow policies of assistance that only attack the symptoms and not the root causes of poverty (ibid). The idea is that the problem is “out there” on a poor periphery of the world, whose misfortunes have no connection with the acts and omissions by the powerful in the wealthy core of the world (Lewis 1999, p.7). Freire calls for a ‘conscientisation’ of people. Likewise, Chambers (2005 p.203) calls for “pedagogy of the non-oppressed,” enabling those with more wealth and power to welcome having less. This raises questions about the role of
volunteers in development processes today. Can volunteers contribute to Freire’s call for ‘conscientisation’? Or are they involved with a ‘top-down’ transfer of skills in line with modernisation style theories of development?

2.3.2 Development and Volunteers:
The problem of “ethnocentricity” or “Eurocentricity” is already well documented when applying western models of development to the so-called ‘developing world’ (Lewis 1999, p.7; Escobar 1995). In light of these debates, where is the volunteer situated? Ehrichs (2000, p.3) quotes a former Canadian volunteer:

Development? We’d achieve it by teaching, by bandaging, by precept and example. The poor and downtrodden would soon see there was another method of doing things, a better method…we were remarkably ill equipped as we entered the development battle armed with our skill, crisp degrees and a few weeks of orientation.

This is a top-down transfer of knowledge, a ‘modernisation’ approach, as the poor were considered here to be largely “a passive, undifferentiated mass” (ibid). Barthem puts it in less than subtle terms when he says: “Gap refers to the empty space between the ears of over privileged teenagers. Or the chasm between materialistic students dripping with iPods and the impoverished subjects of their misguided charity” (2006, p.1).

Volunteers, and development workers, can frame the people they want to serve as “Other” (Ehrichs 2000, p. 5). Simpson argues that this ‘othering’ produces relationships that create particular notions of “third world” and of “development” (2004a p.682). It is a type of tourism founded on the view of “the beneficiaries of development as passive and reliant on external ‘expert’ knowledge” (Simpson 2004b, p.39). This increases the divide between developed and underdeveloped countries as it portrays the volunteer as the benevolent giver and the people of the South as needy, helpless and in need of our help, thus helping to perpetuate relationships of superiority and inferiority (cf. Hutnyk 1996; Ehrichs 2000; Dillon 2006).

Some volunteers can be seen to be in a position of power because they are from so-called developed countries or simply because they are white and therefore considered to be more ‘advanced’, when in reality they may be lacking the necessary skills.
(Cannon and King 2005). This is not helped by the focus of most sending organisations on the personal development of the volunteer, encouraging them to be “change makers” and to “develop people, share cultures, build futures” (I-to-I 2002 quoted in Simpson 2004a p.684). Simpson argues that the language used by volunteer agencies portrays ‘development’ as something that “can be done specifically by non-skilled, but enthusiastic volunteer-tourists” (ibid. p. 685). There is little evidence of strategic project planning and questions around long-term strategy along with the appropriateness and impact of volunteers, appears to be missing from the majority of gap year programmes (ibid).

Returned Volunteer Action (RVA) accuse volunteers of being part of a “finishing school” for the white middle-class and that “it is accepted by virtually everyone that the only person who benefits from such a ‘finishing school’ approach is the volunteer” (1991, p.21). Hosts continue to have little power over greater issues surrounding the development of volunteer placements such as who comes and when, according to Sin (2006). This experience today has the capability of unsettling existing power hierarchies in the host-community as volunteers are entering situations that are defined by the past actions of people from the North such as invasions, conquests, and colonialism (Cannon and King 2005).

As examined above, the possible motivations of volunteers suggest that their perceptions of so-called underdeveloped countries are based on a particular worldview: ‘they’ are backward and ‘need help’.

Questions become about ‘why developing countries have not ‘developed’ yet? – with the assumption that there’s something wrong with ‘them’, rather than ‘what causes the poverty and inequality which are so pervasive?’ – which allows for an exploration of what might be wrong with ‘us’ (Dillon 2006, p.2; cf. RVA 1991).

The volunteer experience may offer the opportunity to address this issue but Simpson’s study (2004a) was not so hopeful. She concludes that volunteers allowed material inequality to be excused on the basis that people were happy and ‘it didn’t bother them’. By assuming that happiness is a greater wealth than material conditions, a system of inequality becomes justified and “such a focus diverts criticism of capitalism and Euro-centric ideology and provides an alibi for the inequality, exploitation and oppression in their modern guises” (Mohan 2001, p.159). Poverty needs to be
explained by more than a fatalistic faith in the ‘luck of the draw’ and instead by the structures and systems in which we all participate (Simpson 2004a). Simpson concludes that gap year projects (and therefore short-term international volunteering) operate in a context of inequality: “The processes that allow young westerners to access the financial resources, and moral imperatives, necessary to travel and volunteer in a ‘third world country’, are the same as the ones that make the reverse process almost impossible” (2004a, p.690).

Dillon (2004) notes that when we think about global development, we need to ask ourselves what is it we are thinking about? Is it the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); good governance; justice for all? And if so, do we then regard ourselves as somehow more developed than others? When something is seen as an unquestionable good, then it is hard to question it particularly when you are referring to NGOs, development workers and, in this case, volunteers: “This sacredness has encouraged arrogance and strengthened their feelings of superiority and we-know best attitudes” (ibid p.2). These organisations are not as subject to scrutiny by media: “It is large bureaucracies we mistrust; small voluntary organisations are our friends” (Clark 1991, p.52). Is this experience a taken for granted ‘good”? It is relevant that while there is a lot of literature available on the motivations of volunteers, very little is available on the effects of this experience on the host community.

2.4 Who Benefits? The Role of Short-Term International Volunteers in Development

In his 2008 report to the UN General Assembly, Ban Ki-moon declared that achieving the MDGs “will require the engagement of countless millions of people through volunteer action” (One World 2009), noting the benefits that the concept of volunteering can offer. According to a report by CIVICUS et al (2010), volunteering empowers individuals, encourages civic participation and enhances social cohesion. However, the effects are considered by some to be exploitive. Hutnyk (1996) notes that the altruistic motivations behind volunteer tourism do nothing to challenge the exploitation and oppression he associates with what he sees as a hegemonic world order. Whose interests are being looked after when the volunteer experience involves travelling to an exciting country and when it will enhance the participant’s CV? Or are
the interests of the host community brought to the fore? Let us therefore look at the limited literature available on the effects of this experience on host communities and on the volunteer.

2.4.1 Effects on Host Community:
Brown (1999, p.12) notes that a volunteer is seldom the only beneficiary as output driven volunteering may yield benefits to many: “The provision of a public good for one’s own sake benefits others… the distinction between altruism and self-interest is not always observable”. While there has been an attempt to assign a monetary value to the work of volunteers in the United States (Brown 1999), others see it as a productive activity assessed by its contribution to maintain the well being of society, which cannot be made in the conventional market (Lee 2006).

According to Dekker and Halman (2003, vii) the value of volunteering lies in the fact that it “strengthens political democracy by developing individual citizenship and organising countervailing powers” which in the long-term will benefit the host community. CIVICUS et al (2010) claim that volunteers can serve as important reservoirs of knowledge, which can strengthen development programmes by gathering accurate information about on-the-ground conditions and shaping campaigns. Volunteers can also be seen as valuable sources of economic empowerment as feelings of personal connection to a community encourage people to donate financially to projects (Gillis 2007). They can aid host communities through volunteer services such as a sharing of educational resources for example. In addition, they will make use of locally provided goods and services (Sin 2006).

International volunteering is seen as a means of ‘development education’ that promotes support for aid, global justice, international solidarity, global awareness and international links (Lewis 2005; Randal et al 2004). Volunteer sending organisations such as BOVA (BOVA 2010c) claim that a large number of returned volunteers remain involved in campaigning which CIVICUS et al (2010, p.16), highlight as a key advocacy strategy:

Through coordinated actions such as public marches and rallies, lobbying and information dissemination, volunteers highlight pressing issues of gender, economic and social inequality and call on government, business and civil society to act.
Wearing (2001, p. 39) sees volunteer tourism as righting the wrongs of mainstream tourism and changing relationships. He argues that mainstream tourism is a neo-colonialist activity that perpetuates inequality and turns “culture into a pre-packaged commodity”. It adversely affects communities and the environment in underdeveloped countries. However, Wearing sees volunteer tourism as being capable of causing positive changes in individuals’ values and consciousness. This subsequently influences their lifestyle while, at the same time, encourages local community development (ibid).

Nevertheless, the effects on the host community may not be entirely positive. Dóchas (2007) notes that in 2007 there were 45 volunteer sending organisations in Ireland and 24 of those had emerged since 2000. They state that these organisations are catering for the demand from the public for short-term placements rather than sending volunteers to address the needs of a host community. Yet, throughout publicity from sending organisations there are multiple references to the ‘usefulness’ of the volunteer and how they are ‘needed’. Simpson (2004a, p. 686) quotes from Teaching and Projects Abroad: “Mongolia, a land of desert and mountains with a culture older than Genghis Khan, needs you!” This brings questions about the advertising used by sending organisations but also shows that there is a perception that Mongolia, in this case, will crumble for want of a few western volunteers (ibid).

Ehrichs sees volunteering as high on “agency” as people, rather than economics, are its focus: “It purports small scale incremental change rather than the large sweeping cures that modernisation promised. It also appreciates knowledge as locally constructed” (Ehrichs 2000, p. 6). He suggests a discourse has evolved around volunteering that emphasises learning; a “two way process” and “partnership” but he notes that it still frames locals in the South as “other”. The volunteers “are not “othered”. Only the South remains the Other” (ibid. p.7-8).

Tallantire sees a tendency to have “misplaced generosity in bestowing gifts of money…[This] has encouraged begging and unwittingly undermined the natural dignity of indigenous people” (1993, p. 282). A simple act of good will on the part of the volunteer can have greater consequences they had not intended and indeed this is
relevant to the entire ‘development’ agenda: “People know what they do, they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is what what they do does” (Foucault in Rainbow and Dreyfus, 1982, p.187).

And what about skills? Lee (2006, p.5) notes the need for empowerment as volunteers can play significant roles but not without the appropriate skills and they must be able to utilise their skills in a specific context so they become “volunteer assets”. For example, a qualified teacher may be an asset in their home country but what happens when they land in a village in rural India without knowing the language and after a few weeks, or in some cases days, of orientation? These debates bring questions about the ‘usefulness’ of the volunteer.

2.4.2 Effect on the Volunteer
Irish Aid (2009) acknowledge that the benefits to the host community in the short term are limited, but they note specific benefits for the volunteer in terms of travel, adventure and enhancing their own career opportunities. The experience can lead a person to an interest in development issues and social activism (cf. Behan 2009; CIVICUS et al. 2010). Many individuals working in development have started out as a volunteer and regard those experiences favourably and “highly compatible with the qualities required for paid development work” (Ehrichs 2000, p.2; cf. Smillie 1995).

A study by Zahra and McIntosh (2007, p.116) claims that there was a lasting change in the values and behaviours of volunteers because of their experience, especially in their attitudes towards material possessions and the value given to the human being:

Volunteer tourism is shown to have intrinsic reward; the potential to change a participant’s perceptions about society, self-identity, values, and their everyday lives…volunteers experience self-reflection, increased social awareness and support and experience a subsequent change to their daily lives and belief systems (Arai 2000; Broad 2003; Brown and Lehto 2005; Simpson 2004; Wearing 2001).

As Devereux (2008, p.358) suggests, international volunteering can be a “self-serving quest for career and personal development on the part of well-off Westerners,” but it can provide a space for an exchange of knowledge and cross-cultural experiences. Volunteers can raise awareness of and commit to, “combating existing unequal power relations and deep-seated causes of poverty, injustice, and unsustainable development”
(ibid) Likewise, Korten (1990b, p. 172) sees volunteerism as central to global developmental transformation as volunteers have values that free them from “dependence on conventional economic and political rewards”.

A change in the perspectives and day-to-day behaviour of volunteers, due new awareness or understanding about a particular situation, is linked to Chambers’ call for a “pedagogy of the non-oppressed” (2005, p.203). It allows people to enhance their understanding of the world around them. Experience and reflection on that experience is key, which ultimately can lead to action (Fountain 1995; Trewby 2007). Freire calls for “the action and reflection of men [and women] upon their world in order to transform it” (1970 p.79). Trewby (2007) notes that volunteers have often expressed an intention to act in some way after their return and that sending organisations need to adopt a follow up programme for their returned volunteers (cf. BOVA 2010c).

2.5 Relationships

The criticisms of the volunteer experience to date suggest that it helps to perpetuate unequal power relationships and is in some way exploitive of host communities. Therefore it is useful to explore the relationships between the individual, the sending organisation and the host community. As Fowler (2001, p.11) notes: “good development work needs alliances, contracts, counterparts, compacts, fellowship, sisterhood, solidarity and straight forward, honest to goodness international co-operations across the board”.

2.5.1 The Volunteer and the Host Community

Schanning (1995) argues that the relationship between the volunteer and recipient is structured to be an ethical one in that the major source for volunteering is altruistic. It involves a special kind of exchange relationship where people are “obligated to each other” (Schanning quoted in Lee 2006, p.2). Of course this is questionable, as we have seen above, but there is a deeper level of engagement between hosts and guests in most volunteer experiences. By living and working with the community, relations of trust and understanding are often forged between people who are working together towards a common purpose (Butcher 2003; Sin 2006). The volunteer experience also has the capacity to build in-depth relationships between most unlikely people in disparate
geographic locales, often belonging to different ends of the social and wealth spectrum (Brown and Morrison 2003; Sin 2006). Butcher (2003) notes that if volunteers adopt a ‘serving attitude’, then an equal relationship can be achieved as “serving exceeds philanthropic or charitable giving, and offers to the aid-recipient not only what a volunteer has but also part of who they are” (ibid. p. 116).

Sin (2006) argues that volunteer tourism broadens the cultural and social experiences of local communities, especially in rural areas where people often have little means of visiting places outside their own province or country:

Much as volunteer tourists learn about local customs and practices from their hosts, hosts also engage in a similar broadening of social and cultural experiences...villagers in host communities often stopped to talk to us and asked us seemingly fundamental and unexpected questions. Some examples include whether Singaporeans farmed in fields, or if we hand-washed our laundry (ibid, p. 116).

The introduction of volunteers as ‘others’ in the host communities results in an accumulation of cultural capital in a similar manner as the volunteer. So while criticisms of the volunteer experience revolve around fuelling concepts of ‘other’, Sin’s study argues that this ‘othering’ is also experienced by the volunteer (2006, p. 117). Volunteers often live as a single outsider in a community and therefore depend on local people and networks for daily living. They live on a minimal allowance and some make an effort to learn local languages, which reinforces the power of locals. These are “manifestations of ‘reversals’ as Chambers outlines…and efforts to put the first last, to ‘disempower uppers’ (1997: 234-35)” (Ehrichs 2000, p.9).

Yet, volunteers still rely on the tourism economy, and through their desire to seek out ‘real experiences’, they can possibly “frame the experience and shape culture and nature to their own needs” (Desforges 1998 quoted in Sin 2006, p. 127). Therefore it is possible for the experience to place volunteers and their sending organisations in positions of higher importance to the host community. This may result in a certain ‘powerlessness’ of hosts. Do they have a choice in accepting volunteers on one level and once they are there, how much time is spent catering for their needs?
There are also issues in placements with regard to sensitivity and communication. As volunteer experiences entail a more intense contact between host communities and guests over a significant time period, Clarke notes that this can “result in greater damage to the fragile host culture than was readily apparent” (1997, p. 227). While his reference to the host community as ‘fragile’ is certainly questionable, he makes a valid point in terms of the influence of volunteers. Sin cites a respondent’s account of her ‘bad experience’ with volunteers, whom she describes as,

Rich kids who have nothing better to do. They don’t know anything about the developing world…They don’t learn anything because they think they want to change this world. You cannot have this kind of thinking. If you go to another culture, you have to learn from the other culture. You cannot say this culture is rubbish. If you think so, then why do you come? (2006, p. 128).

As this example shows, some experiences create feelings of anger and resentment in the host community. Sin (2006) also notes that volunteers frequently complain about living conditions, for example, power failures and having to hand-wash clothes. This indicates to the local communities that they were failing as hosts. It also emphasises the volunteer’s superior position while undermining the local’s. A participant in Sin’s study noted that volunteers need to have emotional maturity, respect the rules that are in place, especially in a school setting: the volunteers perceived that,

The Sisters were too strict with their students, [this] endorsed the teenage students’ defiance against the rules...Thus, cultural sensitivity, awareness and the ability to take responsibility for one’s actions, all need to be deeply ingrained in the volunteer tourists’ minds (Sin 2006, p. 129-30).

2.5.2 The sending organisation and the host community

The dangers of replicating power relationships can also be applied to the sending organisation-host community relationship in terms of whose needs are being catered for? The majority of sending organisations, in a study by Morgan (2006), chose placements in discussion with local partner organisations and local community representatives. This “could suggest active consideration of local development needs or just the necessary means for sending organisations to secure placements” (ibid. p.1). However, she also notes that the priority of sending organisations is attracting volunteers rather than the effects they will have.
It is important to note that a ‘for-profit’ industry has developed around the volunteer experience. For example, one of the largest sending organisations in the UK, I-to-I, is now owned by First Choice Holidays. This has blurred the line further between tourism and short-term international volunteering (Trewby 2007). Organisations have their own agendas and as Smith and Duffy (2003) question: “Can the tourism industry afford a conscience?” (quoted in Trewby, 2007, p. 35). Volunteers are often one off customers and therefore there is an emphasis on their experience rather than on the host community’s. This is problematic (Morgan 2006).

It is the responsibility of the sending organisation to provide pre-departure training and therefore questions can be raised as to how far they prepare the volunteer for working in the ‘development’ context? A survey by Tourism Concern (2007, p.6) reported that half of the 107 volunteers surveyed had received no pre-departure training. Simpson argues that the educational outcomes of the experience are only assumed; contact and experience are not enough as they risk reconfirming volunteer’s previously held stereotypes (Simpson 2004b).

Can the volunteer experience build new relationships and equal relationships involving mutual exchange and a moving away from ideas of ‘superiority’ and ‘top-down’ models? There is a growing emphasis on ‘responsible volunteering’ amongst sending organisations in light of the debates noted so far in this chapter. Possible criteria for responsible short-term international volunteering will now be explored.

### 2.6 Responsible Volunteering

There has been a call for volunteers to carry a critical perspective of global issues with them in their work. Scholars, such as Simpson, call for a “pedagogy of social justice” (2004a, p.690) for the volunteer experience because, according to her, it is an educational system that ignores issues of prejudice and oppression and therefore becomes complicit with them. Ehrichs (2000) argues that volunteer action must reject the notion of ‘other’ and this depends on the critical consciousness of the volunteer. “The volunteer should discern elements in their environment that play into the
‘cynicism of power’…and then determine what action will reverse this or liberate them from this pattern” (ibid. p.10). The action may be in silence, in listening or in non-intervention (ibid; Rahnema 1997b).

2.6.1 Comhlámh’s Volunteer Charter
Comhlámh’s Volunteer Charter was published in 2006 to “encourage good practice in volunteering for global development” (Comhlámh 2006, p.2). It sets out seven principles, drawn up in consultation with volunteers, sending organisations and host projects to encourage “partnership, solidarity and respect” between all involved in this experience (ibid. p.3). This aims to ensure that all involved benefit in some way and the host community is not exploited. The following is a synopsis of the charter, which can be found in full in Appendix IV. Comhlámh urge volunteers and sending organisations to:

1. Inform themselves about all relevant issues relating to their placement. This includes their own motivations; issues of global inequality and poverty and making contact with former volunteers.

2. Familiarise themselves thoroughly with their role description before departure and make a signed commitment which ensures that work has been planned and that there is a need for their presence. Participation in training and induction is also included in this criterion.

3. Respect and be sensitive to local customs; adopt the role of learners and guests. Intercultural learning must form part of training processes. Volunteers need to adjust their expectations about what can be achieved and focus on forging relationships with other people, learning from them and accepting that things will be done differently.

4. Act always in a professional manner; be flexible and adaptable while on placement.

5. Take due care with personal safety; physical and mental health.

6. Channel the experiences and knowledge gained while overseas into society in their home country. Participating in a debriefing process, correspond with potential volunteers and consider the opportunities to remain involved in global development work on return home: “if we only go overseas to help, but do not
work to challenge the root causes of global injustice, our actions will not help to prevent the recurrence of present problems” (Comhlámh, 2006, p. 14).

7. Accept and sign a code of conduct embodying these principles.

2.6.2 BREADS Volunteer Policy
The host community in this case study, BREADS, have also written a Volunteer Policy (Appendix III), in the hope of facilitating responsible volunteering in their projects. For now I will highlight the relevant points for this study in terms of the volunteer, effects and relationships. The policy highlights the following:

The volunteer:
- Volunteering is an expression of our social responsibility.
- The volunteer is a mature and committed individual above 18 years of age, who is willing to be of service to any project in our province.
- Volunteer placements give people across the globe an opportunity to gain an experience and make BREADS instrumental in touching the lives of many and changing their outlook towards life.

Effects:
Roles and functions of the volunteer are explored in the policy and include topics such as:
- Volunteers learning about the local situation of the people;
- Living with child labourers/street children;
- Teaching, sports and other activities are noted;
- Spreading awareness of the work of the project;
- Informing the supervisor of holiday plans and dates of absence;
- Contributing to the project with specific qualifications and skills;
- Making evaluations at intervals agreed upon during the placement.

Relationships:
- The sending agency is the international organisation that selects, prepares and applies for placement of young people from their own countries.
• Volunteers will only be accepted through credible reference, preferably through the Salesian organisation.
• The final decisions on placing volunteers in projects rest with BREADS.
• Documentation regarding each volunteer will be maintained at BREADS offices.
• Financial help or support is not expected from volunteers unless they willingly do so.
• The receiving project must keep the volunteers who have been there informed of the activities in the projects after their period of placement.
• The role of the sending organisation is highlighted and includes preparing the volunteer through training days and providing BREADS with all relevant information about the individual.
• The roles of the co-ordinating office, i.e. BREADS, and the receiving projects are also highlighted.

Both of these documents aim to challenge the criticisms of short-term international volunteering explored in this chapter. They aim to ensure that the experience is a positive one, where all involved benefit: the host community, the sending organisation and the volunteer. Using these policies as guidelines, is this case study an example of a responsible volunteer programme, where all involved benefit?

2.7 Conclusion
This chapter has highlighted the debates surrounding short-term international volunteering in terms of the motivations of volunteers, their effects on the host community and the relationships that are created during such placements. As we have seen, the experience is accused of promoting exploitive relationships that are of little benefit to host communities. On the other hand, it is seen by some to be an experience that promotes global solidarity and one that can challenge inequality through a ‘conscientisation’ of people, once it takes place within a ‘responsible volunteering’ context. The questions raised for this research include whether or not the case study of BREADS is one that can be considered a responsible volunteer experience? What do host communities see as the role of the volunteer in development? Chapter Three focuses on the methodology used during data collection in India.
Chapter Three
Methodology

3.1 Introduction
The purpose of the literature review in the previous chapter was to explore the main concepts of short term international volunteering in relation to the volunteer; motivations; effects; and relationships. It established a theoretical framework of responsible volunteering, through which to analyse the findings. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a rationale for deciding on the methods of research employed and to highlight the strengths and limitations of these processes.

3.2 Research Approach
The overall approach of this research is qualitative. Qualitative research refers to a number of methodological approaches, based on theoretical principles such as phenomenology, hermeneutics and social interactionism. It employs methods of data collection and analysis that are not quantitative and describe reality as experienced by the respondents (Sarantakos, 1998, p.6). It does not reduce people to numbers and therefore there is not a loss of the perceptions of the respondents, their views and experiences (ibid. p.46). Mikkelsen (2005) notes that qualitative research is a flexible approach of building up an in-depth picture of a situation or community. As I am analysing the perceptions of a community, in terms of their reality of working with volunteers, I felt this would best be facilitated by a qualitative approach. This allows local experience, views and interpretations to be voiced. These views are informed and contrasted by the literature in the final analysis.

3.3 Research Methods
3.3.1 Case Study
The case study approach focuses on one instance of a particular phenomenon. This is its defining characteristic where a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue (Denscombe, 2007, p. 36). Stake (1998) notes that it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else and the case may be seen as typical of other cases or not. This allowed me to focus my topic in a particular context, in this case in the projects of BREADS in Karnataka, India. A case study approach does not
give a representative picture but it can provide a detailed understanding of a situation or phenomenon (Kane and O’Reilly-De Brúin 2001). The logic behind concentrating efforts on one case rather than many is that there may be insights to be gained from looking at an individual case that may not have come to light through the use of a strategy which tried to cover a large number of instances, like a survey approach (Denscombe 2007; Robson 2002).

The case study allows for a more holistic approach. Relationships and processes within social settings tend to be interrelated and to understand one thing it is necessary to understand many others and how they are linked. It allows you to unravel the complexities of these relationships as you can deal with the case as a whole and discover the many parts. It offers the opportunity to discover why certain outcomes might happen (Sarantakos, 2005; Denscombe, 2007). For example, when looking at the perceived effect of volunteers on practical work in a community, it offers the chance to explain the factors that would affect this work such as language barriers; relationships with local staff etc. instead of simply stating the result. Also, case studies employ methods that encourage familiarity and close contact with the informants focusing on verifiable life experiences.

I have specifically chosen BREADS as a case study for this research as I wanted to work with a group of individuals who shared a similar experience of international volunteers. I am familiar with the organisation and have access to their sources. I approached them and asked if it would be possible for them to facilitate such research. They seemed very interested in the study, as they had been running an international volunteer programme for the past ten years without any research being done on its effects on their projects. The case study of BREADS is only one example of a variety of international volunteer programmes available, therefore this selection is not meant to be representative of all volunteer programmes.
3.3.2 Sampling

The sampling strategy refers to the procedures and criteria used for the selection of the participants for the research. I used non-probability sampling, which is deemed “acceptable when there is no intention or need to make a statistical generalisation to any population beyond the sample surveyed” (Robson, 2002, p. 264). As my research involved people who have experience of working with volunteers there was no need to include a representative cross-section of the entire population, as occurs with probability sampling (Denscombe, 2007).

The crucial and defining characteristic of non-probability sampling is that the choice of people to be included is definitely not a random selection (ibid). I liaised with the director of BREADS to identify projects that would be suitable for this study in that they regularly have volunteers working and living with them. Once these projects were identified they were contacted by BREADS and asked if they would be willing to participate. Five projects confirmed that they would like to participate however I visited only four during the data collection period due to time constraints.

I used purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling. This is where the researcher deliberately chooses subjects whom they consider to be relevant to the topic (Kane and O’Reilly-De Brúin 2001). In the projects that I visited I therefore interviewed people who I considered likely to produce the most valuable data. The advantages of this method of sampling is that it allowed me to work with people who I believed would be critical for the research instead of going to a cross-section. It enabled me to concentrate on instances that displayed a wide variety and illuminated the research at hand. It was more economical and informative in a way that probability sampling cannot be (Denscombe, 2007).

There were some instances of snowballing during the course of my research where people were suggested to me, by interviewees, on the basis that they had a lot of experience and would be ‘good to talk to’. This helped to further identify relevant participants and continued until no more substantial information was achieved through additional respondents (Sarantakos, 1998).
The 21 respondents included:

- Children from a child-labour rehabilitation centre who have a volunteer living and working with them.
- Secondary school students who have experience of volunteers teaching their classes.
- Schoolteachers who have experience of working with volunteers. It should be noted that one of the teachers interviewed is a school principal and will be referred to as a teacher in the findings in order to protect anonymity.
- Project staff including members of the Salesian congregation and lay staff from nearby towns and villages.
- Project managers who are all members of the Salesian congregation.
- BREADS staff: these are people who work in BREADS’ development office in Bangalore. They have responsibility for communicating with sending organisations; receiving and accepting applications for placements; the orientation of volunteers on arrival in India and monitoring during placements.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Primary data collection methods included conducting semi-structured interviews with the key informants. The time-scale for this research was 5 weeks and started in June 2010 when I travelled to projects of BREADS in Karnataka, India (see Appendix II). I conducted semi-structured interviews with the groups named above and their experience of volunteers varied from one year to ten years in some cases.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Denscombe, “when the researcher needs to gain insights into things like people’s opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences, then interviews will almost certainly provide a more suitable method” (2007, p. 174). Robson (2002) notes that with face-to-face interviews you can modify your line of inquiry and follow up responses in a way that questionnaires, for example, cannot. I chose semi-structured interviews for various reasons. Firstly, I preferred not to use fully structured interviews as they involve “predetermined questions with fixed wording” (ibid p. 270). This, I felt, would limit the scope of the research as I wanted to probe particular answers that I received. Semi-structured interviews have a conversational style so that you can deal
with unpredictable themes that emerge. Secondly, with semi-structured interviews the order and wording of questions can be changed. The interviewer can add additional questions where appropriate to gain further insight from an interviewee. This is used widely in flexible qualitative designs. The interview topic guide is available in Appendix V.

3.5 Limitations

There are obvious limitations when using a case study, as it is not representative of all cases. The findings, while interesting, may be unique to the particular circumstances of the case and therefore you cannot generalise on the basis of research into one instance (Denscombe 2007). This is indeed problematic and although this case study is unique in many respects, it is also a single example of a broader class of things. Therefore it may be possible to draw tentative conclusions which may be applicable to other cases, for example in terms of the motivations of volunteers or their perceived role in development.

Limitations also arise with the use of interviews as it involves qualitative evaluation and therefore the results must be judged subjectively. It is possible that the influence of the interviewer may become more important than that of the interviewee; the interviewer is in control and their agenda is what matters. Robson (2002) argues that bias can be minimised by recording processes. I digitally recorded all interviews. I also included open-ended questions to allow the conversation to flow into areas that the interviewee wished to highlight or considered interesting, giving an opportunity for respondents to ask questions or voice their concerns. This gave the participants greater freedom to express themselves in response to their interpretation of the question. This is not possible with closed questioning (McNeil and Chapman, 2006).

The interviewer’s job is to encourage interviewees to talk freely and openly and behaviour has a major influence on this. In this regard, I felt that the use of the dictaphone made some respondents uneasy. Assurance of confidentiality seemed to relax the tensions and explaining that its use was mostly due to my inability to write and talk at the same time. I had no major problems with the use of the dictaphone apart
from on one occasion where background noise has made a couple of sentences inaudible in the transcribing process.

Interviewing takes a lot of time and can make “unreasonable demands on busy interviewees” (Robson, 2002, p. 273). This may have discouraged interviewees from taking part as those who work for BREADS have an extremely busy daily schedule. I felt I was flexible with this, only travelling to projects when participants felt it was suitable and making myself available over a period of two days in some cases once I was there.

As this study was carried out in India, there were various cultural barriers, which must be taken into account. English is not the first language of the interviewees. However, all are fluent and work through the medium of English on a daily basis. I have transcribed the data verbatim, which means that the English is broken in places but I wanted to maintain the validity of the responses. Three of the respondents were children aged between 9 and 14 years and for these interviews I relied on a member of the project staff to translate both the questions and answers. This may have heavily influenced the children's responses. In addition, respondents may not have wished to give negative perceptions of past experiences, to offend, or to risk affecting the volunteer programme currently in operation. However, I felt that most respondents addressed the negative aspects of the international volunteer experience sufficiently in their interviews.

Another possible threat to the validity of this research is the relationship between the respondent and interviewer. As I am a previous volunteer with BREADS I have a definite bias with regard to this organisation. It must be recognised that no research is free from the influence of those who conduct it as it involves a process of interpretation (Denscombe 2007). I am conscious of Freire’s questions: “In favour of what do I study? In favour of whom? Against what do I study?” (2004, p. 60). My hope is that the subjective interpretation of the perceptions of the host community will contribute somewhat to an understanding of the role of volunteers in development.
3.6 Ethical issues
Researchers must be aware of ethical issues that may arise when they are conducting social research (McNeil, 2006; Robson, 2002). The key considerations revolve around voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality. This particular study is not a sensitive issue in my opinion but members of the community may have been concerned about their views being relayed to their managers. Therefore, it was vital that they were assured of protected anonymity. “Since a thesis will be public, it is particularly important that the rights of sources are respected where necessary” (Le Voi, 2002, p. 156). Permission was sought and granted from all participants involved. Permission was also granted for the use of photographs in Appendix VII. My interview topic guide was reviewed by the director of BREADS before I began data collection. The topic guide remained unchanged. I made it clear that my research was being carried out independently as part of an MA in Development Studies and how the findings would be used.

In the case of interviews the question of ‘ownership’ is quite clear, as the researcher owns the rights to the data and the conclusions drawn from them. Le Voi (2002) suggests introducing some element of collaboration into the research, which may loosen the power relationship. I intend to make the findings available to BREADS in the form of a report in the hope that it may be of some use to them in the future.

3.7 Data Analysis
Laws et al (2003) note that data analysis involves a process of taking things apart and putting them back together again. It is an ongoing process that presents new information, which requires further reflection on analyse and organisation. Laws et al (2003) suggest approaching it with an open mind. The first steps of data analysis are made during the process of data collection (Sarantakos, 2005). It is during this time that data are collected, coded, conceptually organised, interrelated, evaluated and used as a springboard for further data collection. Therefore collection is merged with analysis (ibid).
Given the variety of data analysis methods available, Kane and O’Reilly-De Brúin’s (2001) were carefully considered in this study where the analysis of qualitative data involves getting the information (data collection); boiling it down (data reduction); organising it in different ways to help you see patterns and relationships (displaying); deciding what you have got (drawing conclusions); and satisfying yourself and others that you have found what you think you have (verifying) (2001, p.365).

Immediately after the interviews the data was transcribed verbatim. Salient points were coded (see Appendix VI for codes) and categorised under headings relating to the key research questions in chapter one:

- The volunteer: definitions and motivations
- The role of the volunteer in development in terms of who benefits:
  - The effect on the host community
  - The effect on the volunteer
- Relationships:
  - Between the volunteer and the host community.
  - Between the sending organisation and the host community

### 3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the methodology and data gathering methods used during the research. I have highlighted the processes that were followed, the limitations encountered and ethical considerations. This research does not seek to generalise from the case chosen but to present the testimonies of the respondents and analyse their perceptions. These testimonies may be typical of similar cases. The following chapter presents the findings of this research.
Chapter Four
Presentation of Findings

4.1 Introduction
This section presents the research findings in light of the key informant interviews. It introduces the voice of the host community and their perceptions of the role of short-term international volunteers (see section 1.4.3). The themes under which the findings are presented are closely linked to the research questions in chapter one and to the key concepts of the literature review in chapter two:

- The international short-term volunteer: definitions and motivations
- The role of the volunteer in development (effects)
- Relationships

4.2 The Short-Term International Volunteer:
4.2.1 Definition
There was wide agreement that a volunteer is someone who has come to do some sort of social work. Teacher A stated, “in my mind volunteer means social work. They'll do some changes in the society, for the people here if they are not having anything”. Secondary school student A acknowledged someone who is involved in a two-way learning process, “they go from their country to help and to gain knowledge. It is a mutual understanding between people, an exchange”. Participants felt that age was not a decisive factor as “an 18 year old and a 60 year old have made a difference in our projects” (BREADS staff B).

There was broad agreement that a volunteer “gives time and energy for the welfare of the beneficiary... someone with a self-sacrificing mentality” (Project manager C). All adult respondents stated that the volunteer is someone who serves, “someone who comes with good intentions to do a service in whatever situations or cultures they are faced with. They are able to adjust and adapt, are committed to service and have humility” (Project staff A). The volunteer is “a learner, a co-facilitator...who has dedication in helping other people despite lack of monetary reward” (Project manager E).
The criterion of travel was included by ten of the twenty-one respondents: a “volunteer is a young person who wants an experience of a country like India. They come from a better off situation, economically and socially. They are mostly from Europe and the U.S. They want to experience a different culture and different country and different context” (BREADS staff A).

4.2.2. Perceived motivations of volunteers

A strong awareness of many different motivations emerged with all respondents referring to the volunteer’s desire to serve those who are less fortunate while experiencing a different lifestyle: “we’ve had almost one hundred volunteers and most of them want to have an experience of our country and culture but mostly they want to work with children who are not fortunate or not having regular lifestyles, they are poor or in situations like child labour, street children” (BREADS staff A). The majority of participants also referred to volunteers having a desire ‘to give’ as project manager D notes, “they really want to give. Give their time, energy, their talents, they really want to make a big difference to children in our projects”.

Respondents highlighted a mentality of “wanting to serve others” but stated that this was characteristic of ‘western’ culture: “there is more of a serving attitude in your countries, a culture of serving” (Project manager A). This type of response was probed with eight of the interviewees. I asked them if they had many local volunteers and all replied that the caste system prevents this ‘service mentality’. Project staff B states that,

working for these type of children is not very much praised and here no rich class will come for the lower class. That is the caste system. But the foreigners who come don’t make any distinctions. They mingle with every one and treat all the same. That is one thing I appreciate.

Eight of the respondents cited enhancing career opportunities or a requirement for university as “they want to be educated for higher posts so they come down to have this experience and have study over it and then submit it to their universities” (Project staff F). While “95% of them come with good intentions and do their duty” some “come for sightseeing and are not committed, they want to have a nice life, they see and then they go back” (BREADS staff B). Two respondents did not know why the volunteers had come.
Wanting ‘to help’ was mentioned by all of the participants as volunteers, “had come to help the poor children and to see how we live” (Child B). Teacher C was asked if volunteers could not help the poor in their home countries. He replied that, “they can do that but first world and third world countries have a difference in their economic outlook. So international volunteers come here to help the people who are really poor. It leads to a sort of upliftment”. Secondary school student B thought that “volunteers come to teach us things we may not be knowing”.

A number of respondents spoke about volunteers from Country A “who have some sort of requirements for social or military service” (BREADS staff B). I asked if they noticed any differences between these volunteers and others. They replied, “there’s a very clear difference. The motivation is lacking and they have a different attitude. The excitement about the volunteer experience is less in them.” One participant, project staff D, related motivations to the portrayal of India by foreign media. He notes, “most of them come from developed countries and they have heard the poor plight of the street children and child labourers, on the TV and in the papers. They want to have an on the spot experience and share the life of these children.”

4.3 Perceptions of the role of volunteers in development

4.3.1 Effects on the host community - practical work

When discussing the role of the volunteer in the project all respondents referred to practical work and activities that included “teaching classes such as English, computers and music, organising activities for children, sport and games” (Project staff F). The children and students interviewed highlighted learning English as an important benefit as child B points out, “we spoke with them in English and we were learning with them. They also taught us exercises and songs from the place where they came.” Child C notes, “they help us with our studies…and they organise our games”. He also emphasised entertainment value: “they show us good movies”.

The adult respondents all focused on the effects of the volunteers on the children and how their presence gave additional support and attention. Project staff C remarked, “these two volunteers came and helped us, taking classes, helping with the work, assisting the children…they showed so much love, caring for them. I was very happy to
have them there”. Project manager C noted, “most of the children are child labourers or orphans who were not experiencing love from anyone. When volunteers come, they really help that and organise free time and help our staff with activities. This is very useful for us”.

Three participants noted that volunteers set a good example for others because of their willingness to serve. Project manager E notes, “they cultivate a habit of self-sacrificing and the children learn much more from an outsider who has new face, new values and new person. I feel they have an experience and remember it as they always ask about the volunteers after they have left.” Two of the children interviewed stated that they also wanted to be a volunteer, “later I want to be a volunteer and go to the hostels to help people” (Child B).

One participant believed “that volunteers from within and outside the community can play a critical role in correcting the imbalance of resources that exist in the society and improve the standard of living of those who live there” (Project manager E). Some volunteers were said to have “been a real blessing to the place, with not only children but all. They were all over the place, involved with everything, all odd jobs possible...there are just some people who make a difference” (BREADS staff B).

4.3.1.1 Skills
All participants referred to some sort of skills transfer between the volunteer and the host community. Project manager C noted that in terms of usefulness “it all depends on the special ability of the volunteer. Some show a lot of creativity and initiative with the youth, which really helps.” In some cases, BREADS send requests to sending organisations as “some communities request volunteers for coaching in sports or skills in music. I remember one volunteer who came for three months only to coach football. Interesting requests. They [the communities] look at what they need for the kids and someone who can give that” (BREADS staff B).

In projects with academic focuses there were mixed responses about volunteers who were not qualified teachers. Teacher A noted, “when you talk with the students they start to learn your language and speak with you.” However, Teacher C has reservations on this, “there is a language barrier that creates a gap, even though it
[the school] is English speaking, what they try to communicate is not reaching to the children sometimes. [Also] classroom management is not up to expectations.” When asked if he preferred that volunteers did not teach in the school he responded, “teaching English language is fine and involving themselves in extra curricular activities”. Three participants recalled volunteers who they felt were not useful. Project staff C noted, “some volunteers were not involved enough in my opinion. Maybe their motivation was lacking.”

Five respondents noted that some volunteers make an effort to “learn the local language...I’ve been impressed with their involvement” (Project manager D). However, fourteen respondents stated that the language barrier meant they could not get fully involved. BREADS staff C notes, “I know it’s not possible to give all that they desire to give because of the context, the language difference...But they do give a lot by their presence. For e.g. in their work with the street children, all they want is some amount of affection, activities and that makes a big difference.”

4.3.1.2 Perceptions of the wider community:
One particular effect related to the perceptions of local people, i.e. outside of the project staff. This was in a minority of cases but I feel it warrants attention. Four participants agreed that the presence of volunteers in rural areas can cause problems, as “the village here is so poor... The volunteer may be a student but they don’t see that. All they see is white skin which means money” (Project staff B). Project manager D noted that, “this can affect the donations which come in...But it’s not a very serious problem because most of our contributors are aware of what is going on”. However, project staff B thought that this was a serious problem as:

local people think that our buildings are owned by you, you are funding and bringing the money. So when I go to buy things like 1kg of rice, they’ll charge me double. If it’s ten rupees, they’ll charge me twenty. When I ask why they’ll say, you have plenty of money with all those foreigners there so you should give more. It makes things difficult for the project.

Another perceived negative effect was that local people assumed the volunteer is there to convert them to a particular religious belief: “some volunteers are atheists and when they come and stay here the news spreads all around that you are here to convert Hindu people. This gives our institution a bad name. So I am happy for volunteers to
come but only to the cities where people do not have these ideas. They are more educated and broad-minded” (Project staff B). BREADS staff B said that they did not send volunteers to certain projects because of the “extreme negative bias... They actually need volunteers in some places in Kerala but they cannot take them because the people there have a lot of stigma about foreigners.”

The perceived threat of religious conversion by volunteers had also grabbed the attention of local government officials as:

> there was an inquiry some time back from the Central Bureau of Intelligence, about foreigners coming over here and staying with us. What are they doing here and so on? We said it was purely for volunteering, there is no conversion taking place, especially when the state is dominated by the BJP [Hindu nationalist party]. The mentality is that we get funds for conversions, that foreigners are rich and they contribute to this institution.

This stigma regarding foreigners had positive and negative effects for school enrolment as project staff E recalls, “we were trying to encourage local children to come to school to be educated. The parents said no because they thought the volunteers were here to convert them.” In other communities the volunteers seemed to enhance the projects reputation. “People outside the project see the foreigners here and then they want to send their children to this school because they think that education will be better with them” (Secondary school student A). Other participants agreed that the above concerns had “created negative impressions in certain contexts that are not easy to convince otherwise. But the immediate staff and close community understand that they [the volunteers] are usually students who have to work to make money to come here and work for the projects.” (BREADS staff A).

### 4.3.1.3 Expectations

The general perception was that “90 % of the volunteers are very good and meet our expectations. One or two will be lacking motivation sometimes” (Project manager C). Other respondents noted that age is sometimes a reason for this as “some are only 18 or 19 and are still in a period of growth. We are usually impressed by their conduct and behave so well and committed to the project” (Project staff D). One participant noted his surprise as he “thought that they would come just to be with us and observe...
and not be so involved. But...they were teaching, helping with work time, games etc. All the time they were with the children and it was very interesting. I was so surprised by this” (Project staff F).

BREADS staff B highlighted a minority of volunteers who come with what was described as the “wrong motivations. They might plan holidays at a time they are needed...when holiday is the focus, expectations are not met”. All stated that in these cases there are guidelines to follow: “If there’s a problem we will talk with them, have an evaluation and also use the volunteer guidelines provided by BREADS” (Project manager A).

4.3.1.4 When a volunteer leaves
Most respondents said that there were no major effects on the community when a volunteer leaves as they “don’t have much responsibilities because they are not here long-term” (Teacher C). Project manager B agreed, “thing is they are not like regular staff, they are simply adding value to what is already there...with counselling and care our staff members can do it”.

Some participants highlighted that “there is a gap naturally because they are so involved with the work. We can make adjustments with this no problem but their presence and loving relationship with the children is no longer there and that creates a vacuum” (Project manager E). Five respondents noted that when a volunteer leaves it sometimes means extra work for other staff members but, as project manager A notes, “after one month there is no problem as usually another volunteer will come”.

BREADS staff B highlighted the mixed reactions when volunteers leave projects. It depends on how the volunteer has been. Sometimes projects are relieved when they go and other times they are really affected...Many good volunteers, in terms of those who have really been there for the project, for the community, it’s heavy on all when they leave.

4.3.2 Effect on the volunteer
All adult participants stressed the effect of the experience on the volunteer as “when they see the culture, the poverty and the problems here they are really moved...It affects their life” (Project manager A).
BREADS staff C notes that most volunteers,

*haven’t got what they were looking for in that their expectations were not necessarily the right ones...But I’d also say that hardly any of them were sorry for what they experienced in those projects...The happiest thing for us is the feedback that they are so grateful for the experience because it has changed young people a lot, in their perspectives to life, to their own situations, their lifestyles and attitudes that they have back home. That is the biggest change they experience and I believe we contribute to them.*

All participants highlighted that it was a learning experience for the volunteer and the host community. Project manager E notes, “*the volunteers learn about different cultures and do things which they did not know. It’s an encounter of two cultures. Not enculturation but interculturation takes place as both benefit, the community where they live and the volunteer themselves.*” He goes on to note that this effect on the volunteer is useful for educating communities in their home country:

*as the saying goes, better to light a candle than blame the darkness. When a person goes back, a community that does not know what is happening here in another world also benefits. The volunteer can enlighten their community about the local situations of the youth here; the culture etc and they make an effort to do something for the project. So I feel there’s a big impact on that.*

A large number of participants expressed this view. Many participants commented on the difficulties experienced by the volunteer while on placement especially in the first few weeks when they are dealing with culture shock. Project manager B said, “*living in this culture I know can be difficult especially without their companions...They have to adjust to food and everything so we try to make them happy while they are here*”. Project manager A noted that “*we receive much more than we give in those first weeks*”.

Those involved in debriefing at the end of placements further highlighted the change in the volunteer as BREADS staff B notes,

*in the orientation I do all the talking. In the evaluation it’s the volunteers who talk and I’m left speechless, the experience they’ve had and how their thoughts have changed. Most tell us to continue this because it really changes young people out there who don’t know the value of things.*
She does stress that this experience needs to be channelled correctly when they return home as,

it can have a negative impact as sometimes they feel guilty. I tell sending organisations that not only preparation is needed but also when they go back to readjust. They go back with a unique experience and have people thinking they are crazy because they start with these guilt trips...Dangerous situation. That worries me. But despite this I would never stop this volunteer network, it’s such a fantastic thing.

4.4 Relationships

4.4.1 The volunteer and the host community

The positive and negative aspects of the relationship between the volunteer and the host community were explored. Most respondents noted positive experiences overall as BREADS staff B notes, “part of all organisations and in life we have positive and negative experiences. I’d say 90-95% were positive. Some have small issues that need to be addressed so we make decisions that are good for the volunteer, for the project and the organisation”.

Others, such as project manager D, noted how the volunteer experience had changed their impressions of foreigners. “I had not much contact with foreigners before. Skin colour is different; lifestyle and culture also...So I used to keep a distance from them. Working with lots of volunteers here has changed my attitude.” Teacher B was asked if the volunteers had changed her perception of foreigners, “yes, first of all dress. I was expecting something else like short dresses, tops etc. But then I realised it was not like that and some wear Indian dress here. Also language, I thought it is difficult and I thought I wouldn’t understand but it was fine. Some even try to learn Kannada words. It’s a great thing.” Project staff C said, “volunteers will visit with the people. They like to go to the villages and take photos because the culture and lifestyle is so different”.

All adult participants stated that a number of volunteers remain in contact with them after their placements as project manager B notes, “we send regular news to them and two or three will be really committed and visit us occasionally and give donations”.
4.4.1.2 “We know best” attitudes

Three respondents made reference to aspects of the relationship where they felt that volunteers were trying to impose ‘western’ value systems. “For example, you are coming from Ireland where you will not find man without dress or without education because there people have social dignity...To bring them to this stage is a gradual process so you can’t compare India to Ireland and try to bring all the changes to here. You do it slowly and it takes many years” (Project staff B).

BREADS staff B highlighted this issue also where “most will have this positive outlook, where they can see what’s not there and try to bridge that gap” but others, “are constantly comparing the situation to their own country. It all really depends on how the volunteer converts themselves to the situation.” This participant noted that she addresses this issue in the orientation process: “accept all the differences. I tell them they are not here to sort the differences but to see in an already existing structure how can you contribute...Try to understand the context. Try to understand the culture. Try to understand their upbringing and then see where you can pitch in. You can’t change everything”.

Three participants made reference to a specific negative experience they had this year. It was an extreme case but I feel it deserves attention as it resulted in a volunteer being asked to leave. Project staff B explains that this volunteer,

saw teachers beating the children and that is not acceptable in your culture. We know this also and it does not fit with children’s rights. But in India this is a very slow process to educate people not to do this. Salesians have the preventive system, which does not allow physical punishment...This volunteer did not understand this.

I asked project manager A about this volunteer and he said, “this was an unusual case. Normally the volunteers are very committed... I don’t know why he came here with this attitude. We had meetings with him and BREADS; we discussed together and decided to discontinue this placement.”
BREADS staff A explains that,

this volunteer reacted violently. He spread news all over, sent emails all over the country and back home. So these things cause a lot of problems. He really damaged the project. He didn’t communicate with me. I went and spent time there with him. Still nothing was resolved. He had to go home. This was a very bad experience for us. But in ten years, it has been the only case.

Two participants highlighted inappropriate behaviour amongst some volunteers. Project staff member E said, “It’s important not to generalise…but one negative thing is like smoking. We had one lady who was a chain smoker and we told her that it was not acceptable here for women. But it was difficult for her to stop, so much that it became a bit of a scandal. The children will be influenced by these things”. Project staff D noted that it creates a bad impression in the village: “they [local people] say the foreigners come from a destructive culture, as they’ve no understanding of your culture. It gives the institution a bad name. So if they keep well and adjust to this culture and not to be publicly doing these things, then it’s ok.”

4.4.1.3 Cultural exchange

All participants perceived volunteering as a learning experience that “creates a lasting impact in the hearts and minds of the beneficiaries…where cultures meet together and exchange of culture of values and of talents and abilities takes place” (Project manager E). Secondary school student C also pointed to an exchange relationship as “we gain knowledge of the things you have in your country which may not be known for us. Like English and also culture is different from ours. The volunteer also gains knowledge when they mingle with us, about this culture and all that so for them it’s a good chance and experience”. BREADS staff B highlighted the opportunities for everyone involved, as

it’s a wonderful opportunity for young people. I had a lot of bias when I started as I didn’t think people in the Western world had a giving mentality until I saw it. Here very few people would volunteer. I think it’s amazing that an 18 year old would give his/her life for a year to a cause like this. It surprised me.

4.4.2 The sending organisation and the host community:

Out of the twenty-one respondents, only BREADS staff said that they had contact with the sending organisation. They noted that overall the relationship is very positive: “most sending organisations communicate very well with us. Recently I have said no to one organisation from _________ because they had been poor in communicating. So
we cannot operate like that” (BREADS staff A). BREADS have clear policies in place “which show criteria we would like. For e.g. the sending organisation doesn’t select the project, we do. They tell us they have three or four people and we look at the possibilities. There has been a good amount of communication built up over the years” (BREADS staff C).

Project manager E noted that he did not have contact with the sending organisation but he “would like to be able to give feedback directly. Because when it’s through BREADS, it’s through a third party, it may not be so perfect”. This manager also noted a gap in communication affecting the timing of placements as “some volunteers come in January towards the end of our academic year. So for projects involving academic institutions, this can be difficult to incorporate them.”

4.4. 2.1 Pre-departure Training

When asked if they thought volunteers received adequate training from the sending organisations before they came, most respondents thought that they did. Project manager E notes, “the way they incorporate themselves into the community I realised they have received sufficient training. For e.g. I never heard them complain about the food, the culture or the situation here in the locality, especially people coming from the west they are from a different ambience.”

Some participants noted that training varies depending on the organisation as “some take a lot of time out and prepare them through a serious process, through a curriculum and exposure of experiences, which makes a lot of difference” (BREADS staff C). “It’s like a teacher taking a class. Some children immediately respond, some are a bit slow so that will also happen with volunteers” (Project manager C). BREADS staff A named specific sending organisations from Europe and the U.S. which he thought prepared the volunteers extremely well. But he noted problems also; “you need returned volunteers involved who have been to India and can explain the culture and the ways. For e.g. in _________ one trainer has been to India only once. Volunteers who are training need many different perspectives of experiences”.
BREADS staff B notes that most sending organisations do an excellent job:

*I see that in the quality of the volunteers because they come more than prepared. I respect them for the filtering they do. They pick out from many those who are highly motivated. But there are some countries where filtering isn’t done so well and it becomes a task for us…Places where there’s interaction with returned volunteers from India are a lot more prepared. They are ready.*

She goes on to say that volunteers who come with close follow up are best “like they have peer mentors who have been in similar situations. All the experiences can be shared. These kinds of things are excellent. Some come totally prepared with a little language also. This is nice. But I’ve seen a few coming totally clueless.”

All of the participants highlighted some aspects of pre-departure training for the volunteers that could be enhanced as project manager D said, “I’d tell them about Indian culture for e.g. dress. There I know, but once in India they should wear Indian dress.” BREADS staff A thought that sending organisations should “make them aware of the challenges and problems and also the opportunities. Only send those who are really fit.” Project manager F noted the need for “a serious programme of training and assessment of those who want to volunteer [otherwise] you really don’t know if you’ve made the right choice…In training programmes, motivations need to be addressed.”

Project manager B recommended including “someone from this culture” in the pre-departure training to address cultural issues. “They can explain the difficulties to them, the situations, culture, language, caste system etc.” Another area he highlighted was in terms of specific country information:

*they have to explain to them that they are not going to a really underdeveloped country. Indian focuses are different. If they are in Bangalore it’s completely different to volunteering here [rural area]…therefore they must do three things: they have to accept, they have to adjust and they have to adapt.*

### 4.4.2.2 Why accept volunteers?

Participants were asked to explain why projects accept volunteers. The majority highlighted the educational value of this experience as being useful for everyone in the community. BREADS staff C notes, “for many communities that request volunteers it’s for additional help with the children, presence and that the children will get exposure to different cultures. Also, kids will pick up English as volunteers don’t know...”
"local language so kids are forced to speak with them in English." Project staff F wasn’t sure but saw the benefits: “I don’t know why we accept really but I know once a good volunteer comes we are very happy. They are extra help and with their help we can do something greater. With some, their financial help can help the centre grow”.

The general consensus was that it was a good opportunity for people to see the work in the project and it was an opportunity “to influence the life and attitudes of the volunteers. Your life here and there are completely different especially the lifestyle so I never say no to BREADS” (Project manager E). Teacher A commented that she would prefer to have volunteers here because, “the children learn about your culture, how are the people there and their reality. Not only learning from TV or books. Now they know. It’s like sharing culture.”

### 4.4.2.3 Funding

The adult participants were asked if they thought the volunteer programme was connected to funding. The responses were mixed with almost half saying “no, not at all. Our points of view have been respected and we don’t translate it to a conditional clause for funding” (BREADS staff C). However, others acknowledged that “when volunteers come and see the reality here then they contribute to our work. We suggest things and they collect for us. 90% of our volunteers want to do something and they come and tell me and ask me what is needed” (Project manager A). Those who acknowledged that volunteers donate financially stated that it involves dialogue within the community. Project manager C noted, “we will discuss this as a community and if it is useful for the children then yes that is good. If it is for the development of the project and progress, but it is up to them, we don’t expect it”.

BREADS staff B acknowledged that expectations of funding have grown somewhat in projects. “some consequences are there because people think if volunteers are there this is one thing they could do...It also depends on their work. Some don’t fund but do amazing work. But if both are lacking then there is a negative picture.” Project staff D noted that volunteers made some effort to give “something for the project because people in their country are able to trust that person so there’s no mismanagement of funds. They know the money will be used for a particular cause”.

52
4.4.2.4 Who decides?

Participants were asked if they had a choice in accepting volunteers in their projects and if they felt they could say no. Project manager D noted, “we have been asked if we require a volunteer in the community and we always said yes. They tell us who is available and we discuss the options and put forward our opinion”. Project staff G, who shares a house with the volunteer in this particular project, said that she did not have a choice, “It is not up to me, the rector [manager] says.” When asked if she would prefer to have volunteers there or not she replied, “yes I would have because they help me with the children, it’s extra help for us and the children love having volunteers here”. Project manager E noted that he requested volunteers from BREADS. “I decided to have volunteers here. There were none before I came. So I asked BREADS if it would be a possibility because I believe that a mixture of cultures will enhance our community. BREADS communicate to us early on who is available, what duration we would like to have…I always ask for a person who can mix well with young people, help them, certain talents we expect”.

Participants were asked if they had ever said no to BREADS. Again there were mixed responses as project manager A replied, “we have not said no to anyone so far. BREADS decide”. Some project managers felt they had total control over the decision, “we have a choice, we decide. We have said no.” BREADS staff A explained the process, “once we finalise with the sending organisation, I approach the project and tell them what volunteers are available, their nationality, skills etc. So I give them a choice of volunteers.” Do they ever say no? “Sometimes they say no. But other projects have come forward asking for volunteers this year, requested them. So many of our houses are opening up to this.”

In terms of the relationship with the sending organisation, BREADS felt that they could say no. BREADS staff B notes, “I’ve said no several times. One limitation here is that we can’t have volunteers at all of our projects so out of forty we can use maybe only eight or ten spaces...We prefer six months minimum so some applications I turn down on that basis.”
4.5 Changes
Participants were asked what changes they would like to see made to the volunteer programme. Many said they would not make any changes while some highlighted “extra monitoring and support for the community who have volunteers,” as project manager C notes, “because the attitudes of some staff here to the volunteers are different. They should be aware of the common policy of BREADS.” Others highlighted the need for monitoring and support for the volunteers while they are on placement.

BREADS staff C suggested that,

> it would be good if the sending organisation were involved more while the volunteers are here. Some organisations have support staff and that makes a big difference. Secondly a system of monitoring, quarterly meeting volunteers from our own office…Finally, sending organisations could have a better network. Financially it is not possible for all to come here so maybe those who come could look into placements and pass information onto others in a common forum.

4.6 Other relevant comments
All participants were asked if they would like to make any other comments in relation to the volunteer experience. Most reiterated the positive effects with project staff C calling it a “wonderful exchange programme”. Project manager C notes, “I am very positive about this volunteer service in our communities…I’m highly appreciative of their good justice and not only their financial help but their presence and real life sharing experience with the children.” BREADS noted that there were still some issues with defining the role of the volunteer but,

> this is a good experience and new concept for us, only in the last ten years or so. A lot of training and accompanying our projects to accept volunteers, saying who they are and what they could do...Some logistical problems still as they are not really staff or management. These issues are there but we’ve evolved ourselves also to accept, to understand better and see the places where we can grow in this (BREADS staff C).

Project manager E noted,

> I think this is a noble venture which people enter into. When there’s so much stress on market economy, a person who comes forward to volunteer knows that their fulfilment is not in self-realisation but in self-transcendence. Developing one’s talent to the maximum is no use unless it is shared. So a volunteer inspires young children here in India and in my community that self-transcendence is much more important. That is very good.
4.7 Conclusion
This chapter has presented the voice of the host community and their reflections and perceptions of the short-term international volunteer programme, as run by BREADS. This ‘voice’ will now be analysed in light of the background information in Chapter One and the literature in Chapter Two, leading to the drawing together of conclusions from this research.
Chapter Five
Analysis

5.1 Introduction
This analysis is carried out in light of the background information provided in chapter one and the literature explored on short-term international volunteering in chapter two. The process follows a similar pattern of themes used for the presentation of the findings in chapter four in order to maintain a strong link between the experiences of the host community and the concepts highlighted in the literature review. This analysis also refers to the criteria explored in section 2.6 to determine if this case study is an example of ‘responsible volunteering’ where all can benefit.

5.2 The Short-term International Volunteer
5.2.1 Definition
The origins of the term ‘volunteer’ may be military (Cannon and King 2005) but from the findings in 4.2.1 it is clear that participant definitions focus on altruism and travel rather than conquest (Simpson 2004b). Volunteers “give time and energy for the welfare of the beneficiary” (project manager C) and this is consistent with the UN criteria for volunteering noted in section 2.2.1 (Cnaan et al 1996; Devereux 2008; UNV, 2010). The volunteer is perceived as someone who has come to do some sort of social work and is therefore providing support for those whom the state is considered to be failing (Lewis 1987; Simpson 2004b).

A mentality of service, sacrifice and giving were considered to be qualities of the volunteer, which corresponds to Ehrichs (2000) definition and the criteria in the BREADS policy (see 2.6.2). They are seen as someone who has come “to help” and who is from a better economic situation than those they are working with. This may suggest an unequal power relationship (Gronemeyer 2010), however, many research participants acknowledged a two way process in their definitions (Potter 2004). This implies that a volunteer is not someone involved in an exclusive ‘giver-receiver’ relationship as a volunteer is considered to be someone who has “come to help and to
“gain knowledge” (secondary student A) which corresponds to Cannon and King’s (2005) suggestion that the volunteer is a ‘learner’.

The criterion of travel was included in definitions of volunteers who are people “from Europe and the U.S.” (BREADS staff A). I was surprised that some respondents used the term to refer only to foreigners as I have met Indian volunteers working in projects. While volunteers were mostly young people, age was not a decisive factor as “an 18 year old and a 60 year old have made a difference” (BREADS staff B). This is a broader definition than Bartham’s (2006) reference to volunteers as “over privileged teenagers”.

5.2.2 Motivations
An analysis of the findings in 4.2.2 show there was a strong awareness of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations amongst the participants (Meier and Stutzer 2004). Volunteers are perceived as wanting to ‘make a difference’; to give help to others while deriving some personal benefits (Brown 1999; Cannon and King 2005; CIVICUS et al 2010).

While motivations of altruism were noted by all participants (Smillie 1995), it is clear that the host communities are aware and acknowledge the facilitation of an experience for the volunteer. This was seen through their continued reference to a “mutual exchange”, in terms of the volunteer “having an experiencing of our country and culture” (BREADS staff A) or fulfilling requirements for academic courses (Cannon and King 2005; Grayson 2006; Palmer 2002). There was an acknowledgment that volunteers receive such benefits therefore it is not perceived as a one-way process (Potter 2004). This somewhat challenges Hutnyk’s (1996) accusation of exploitation.

The respondents in this study focused on motivations such as wanting to “sacrifice”, wanting “to serve” (Project manager A). 95% of volunteers were said to come with good intentions, apart from those who were coming to satisfy requirements for social or military service. There was “a very clear difference” (BREADS staff B) in terms of their attitude and this suggests that a minority of cases, perceived at 5%, might indeed be exploitive and benefit only the volunteer.
The children interviewed in this study perceived that volunteers were there to teach them things they did not know. This suggests a top-down transfer of skills, associated with ‘modernisation’ theories of development (Palmer 2002; Simpson 2004b). However, this could also be said of the relationship with their local teachers and carers and could be interpreted as part of a capacity-building process, working with local communities and emphasising “agency” (Nederveen-Pieterse 1996).

One participant (Teacher C) referred to his own country as “third world” and the volunteers’ as “first world” when discussing motivations. He acknowledged that “social situations are different” and that volunteers want to help “those who are really poor”. This may be interpreted as contributing to a power relationship of superiority (Simpson 2004a) but it is also an acknowledgement of the reality of 300 million people in India living below the poverty line (CIA 2010) and may suggest that volunteers want to work towards creating a more equal and just world. The perception here is that there are disadvantaged people in the volunteer’s home countries but it is not on a comparable scale to the situations of people in the Global South (Palmer 2002).

The desire “to help” mentioned by all participants is, according to Gronemeyer (2010), the perfect exercise of power and makes assumptions about the capabilities of the host communities (cf. RVA 1991); help is diagnosed from without. It is important to note that Gronemeyer’s interpretation of ‘help’ is extremely negative and she does not acknowledge the benefits involved in altruistic behaviour, as noted by Brown (1999). Yes there are clear self-centric motivations highlighted and Gronemeyer’s (2010) arguments may be true of the initial motivations of volunteers. However, the continual reference to “service” and “mutual exchange” throughout the findings suggest that this experience is more than an “exercise of power” (ibid. p.55). The portrayal of India by global media was recognised by one participant as a motive agreeing with Lough’s (2008) theory on the effect of media on the interest in poverty.
5.3 Perceptions of the role of volunteers in development

5.3.1 Effect on the host community – practical work

There was clear consensus that participants valued the work of the volunteers in terms of the activities they organise for children in these projects. The concept of “presence” (BREADS staff C) with the children emerged as the most important aspect of their role, providing much needed care and activities for them. This highlights Brown’s (1999, p.12) theory that “output driven volunteering yields benefits to many” regardless of motivations. Where volunteers were said to have shown “creativity and initiative” (Project manager C) in working with young people, this highlights a transfer of educational resources and skills as noted by Sin (2006). The usefulness of the volunteer in the project was highlighted by all in terms of extra help and some “who were real blessing to the place, involved with all odd jobs” (BREADS staff B). The volunteers are providing services in the short-term for the host community in terms of extra staff for projects.

One participant viewed the work of both national and international volunteers as “critical” for “correcting the imbalance of resources” (Project manager E) in society. This could be interpreted as in line with modernisation theories of development (Simpson 2004a) or as working with local communities to affect change, a grassroots approach (Nederveen-Pieterese 1998). Seeing as the volunteer is working within existing local projects and structures, and under their supervision, I interpret their practical work as leaning more towards the latter point especially as “they don’t have much responsibilities” in the project (Teacher C). Therefore the host community is benefiting from this.

5.3.1.1 Skills

The fact that BREADS sometimes request volunteers from sending organisations with specific skills, such as coaching sports, highlights the usefulness of the volunteer in these cases as communities “look at what they need for the kids and someone who can give that” (BREADS staff B). For this reason, I would have to disagree with Gronemeyer’s (2010 p.56) theory that the need for “help has been diagnosed from without”. Also, in this case, it is not the sending organisation or the volunteer who is making assumptions about people’s capacities when the request comes from the host.
community. Individual projects are given a choice of volunteers based on their skills, highlighting a consultation process, but also, the volunteer becomes an “asset” for the project (Lee 2006, p.5).

However, there were serious concerns about unqualified teachers working in schools, especially in terms of “classroom management” (Teacher C). This shows that where skills are lacking there needs to be a more clearly defined role for the volunteer, such as assisting in a classroom rather than teaching or “involving themselves in extra curricular activities” (ibid). The language barrier was thought to be an obstacle and meant that they could not be as involved as they would like. Although some were said to make “an effort to learn the local language”, (Teacher A), this limits their usefulness as a “volunteer asset” (Lee 2006 p.5). Nevertheless, according to the research participants, children in these projects are enhancing their own language skills because of the presence of the volunteer (see section 4.3.1).

It was perceived that the volunteers were an example to others and “cultivate a habit of self-sacrificing” (Project manager E). This was perceived to be a quality that was not common amongst local people. I was surprised by this perception, as I was aware of the presence of local people in these communities who make sacrifices to serve others every day. BREADS’ volunteer policy also includes a section for ‘Domestic Volunteers’. However, respondents noted that the caste system prevents this ‘service mentality’ (see section 4.2.2). Caste pervades the heart of all rural communities in India (CIA 2010) and “no rich class will come for the lower classes” (Project staff B). In this sense, the volunteer and the project staff could be leading by example in terms of “service” rather than a ‘superior’ force (Simpson 2004a). Two children responded that they also “want to be a volunteer and go to the hostels to help” (Child B). In this specific case, it confirms the argument by CIVICUS et al (2010) that volunteering encourages civic participation, enhances social cohesion and encourages community development (cf. Dekker and Halman 2003; Wearing 2001).

5.3.1.2 Perceptions of the wider community

The perception of people in the wider community highlights Cannon and King’s (2005; Simpson 2004b) theory that the volunteer is not operating ahistorically and must be mindful that they are entering situations defined by the past actions of people from the
Global North (ibid). I was totally astounded by the perceived threat of religious conversion to atheism, because I had previously spent 6 months in a project of BREADS without realising these assumptions were being made about my presence. In some cases participants noted that it is affecting donations that come in, the price of goods in local markets as well as school enrolment. It reiterates for me Foucault’s statement: “what they don’t know is what what they do does” (quoted in Rainbow and Dreyfus1982, p.87). BREADS noted they do not send volunteers to some projects for this reason. The fact that this warranted an investigation in one project by Karnataka’s Central Bureau of Intelligence (see section 4.3.1.2 and 1.4.1) shows the seriousness of the issue.

Also, one project was said to have gained admissions to the school because of the perception by locals that “education will be better with them” (Secondary school student A). This may highlight the ‘superiority/inferiority’ complex. Others were said to be able to accept the role the volunteer plays in a project (see 4.3.1.2). Therefore it is contributing to cultural capital for the local communities whose perception of white skin has been money and conversion. Perhaps, in this case, the volunteer experience is doing something to rebuild relationships of trust (Sin 2006).

5.3.1.3 Expectations
90% of volunteers were perceived to have met the expectations of their host community and were “committed to the project” (Project staff D). One participant noted his surprise at the involvement of the volunteers in the project and found it a “very interesting” experience (Project staff F). This suggests that this particular volunteer programme is changing his perceptions of western culture (Sin 2006).

Some participants recalled volunteers who were not involved enough, whose motivation was lacking (see section 4.3.1.3). It was clear that BREADS have policies in place to deal with those who are not meeting expectations as communities “have an evaluation and also use the volunteer policies provided by BREADS” (Project manager A, see also Appendix III point 6.7 and 6.8). This goes someway to ensure that volunteers cannot exploit the host community for their own needs in that they have regular evaluations.
5.3.1.4 When a volunteer leaves

The findings in 4.3.1.4 highlight mixed responses here and suggest that the effect when a volunteer leaves depends on the quality of the volunteer. Some noted that there are no major gaps in a project at the end of the placement as, "they don't have much responsibilities because they are not here long-term" (Teacher C). Sometimes “projects are relieved” but for others “it’s heavy on all when they leave” (BREADS staff B). The main effect is perceived to be on the children as they have built a close relationship with the volunteer. Simpson (2004a) argues that the majority of volunteer programmes show little evidence of strategic planning and questions around long-term strategy are missing. The fact that volunteers in this study are not given major responsibilities but are providing extra assistance shows that BREADS are realistic about what can be achieved with such placements. Where there is a gap, it is usually filled by the next volunteer.

5.3.2 Effect on the volunteer

Participants acknowledged an initial period of ‘culture shock’ when volunteers arrive which means the communities are looking after their needs. One participant noted that “we receive much more than we give in those first few weeks” (Project manager B), therefore I do not interpret this period of adjustment as being particularly negative. This is also acknowledged in BREADS’ policy (see Appendix III section 8).

One of the most important findings that emerged for me in this research was the perception that this experience changes the attitudes of the volunteers. This was made very clear during the interviews. Volunteers may not have had the right motivations or expectations (see 4.3.2) but “hardly any of them were sorry for what they experience in those projects” (BREADS staff C). Participants believe that they contributed to a change “in their perspectives to life… their lifestyles and attitudes that they have back home” (ibid). This agrees with the argument by Zahra and McIntosh (2007) that there is a change in the values of volunteers because of their experience. The debriefing session conducted by BREADS at the end of placements was said by one participant to have left her “speechless” (BREADS staff B) as volunteers emphasise how necessary this experience is for changing the perspectives of people from western cultures.
However, she did emphasise the need for all sending organisations to help the volunteer reintegrate back home as some have had “such a unique experience”.

Project manager E noted that it is “better to light a candle than blame the darkness”; the volunteer is perceived to contribute to enhancing the knowledge of people in their own country about the situations of people in India, especially street children and the work of the Salesians with them. This confirms the role of the volunteer as a possible ‘development education tool’ in their home countries as “a community that does not know what is happening here in another world also benefits” (project manager E). This highlights benefits that extend beyond the volunteer programme as the experience can be seen as a means of ‘development education’ promoting support for aid, global justice, international solidarity, global awareness and international links (Lewis 2005; Randal et al 2004).

Volunteers can serve as important reservoirs of knowledge, which can strengthen development programmes (CIVICUS 2010). This of course depends on the volunteer being motivated into action on return and if the sending organisation incorporates a ‘returned volunteers’ programme. Nevertheless, this case somewhat answers Freire’s (1970) call for ‘conscientisation’ and Chambers’ (2005, p.203) call for a “pedagogy of the non-oppressed”. The experience is perceived to enhance the volunteer’s understanding of the world around them. This may challenge the assumption that the problems are ‘out there’ (Lewis 1999) and perhaps allow space for an exploration of “what is wrong with us?” (Dillon 2006). In my view, this is extremely case specific and incorporates Comhlámh’s (2006) criteria of volunteers adopting the role of learners while on placement. It was not possible in this study to examine if volunteers channel their experience and knowledge gained on placement into society on return (see Appendix IV, principle 6). This is for further research but it highlights the importance of the role of the sending organisations in working with returned volunteers (BOVA 2010c)
5.4 Relationships

5.4.1 The volunteer and the host community

The relationships between the volunteers and their hosts were perceived to be “90-95% positive” experiences (BREADS staff B). Brown and Morrison (2003) note that these experiences have the capacity to build relationships between people in disparate geographic locales and different ends of the wealth spectrum. This was something that emerged strongly in the findings in sections 4.4.1 and in 4.4.1.3. Continual references to service, learning experience, and “where cultures meet together and exchange values... talents... abilities” (Project manager E) highlight this point. It also supports Butcher’s (2003) theory that if volunteers adopt a serving attitude, then an equal relationship can be achieved as it offers more than financial contribution but “part of who they are” (ibid. p.116). Where there have been problems it is perceived to be because of a lack of communication between the volunteer and the host community but again it was stated that in these cases decisions are made “which are good for the volunteer, for the project and the organisation” (BREADS staff B).

Sin’s (2006; cf Devereux 2008) argument that volunteers broaden the cultural and social experiences of local communities was also emphasised in this study. It resulted in an accumulation of cultural capital for local people who have little means of visiting places outside their own province or country. It gives an exposure to different cultures for all in the community, “not just from TV or books” (Teacher A). A number of participants noted how “working with lots of volunteers here has changed my attitude” towards foreigners (Project manager D). Some volunteers make an effort to learn local languages, “Kannada words” and “It’s an encounter of two cultures” (Project manager E). Chambers (1997) describes this as a manifestation of reversals, which can reverse power relationships or dynamics (in Ehrichs 2000) and where both the volunteer and the local community can benefit.

Volunteers were said to meet local people, “mingle” and “go to the villages and take photos because the culture and lifestyle is so different” (Project staff C). This could be interpreted as ‘othering’ the host community (Ehrichs 2000; Simpson 2004). However, it is clear that this ‘othering’ is also experienced by the volunteer (Sin 2006) and confirmed above in the perceptions of the wider community as they were said to
perceive the volunteer’s culture as “destructive” (Project staff D). Therefore Ehrichs statement that “the volunteers are not ‘othered’. Only the South remains the ‘other’” (2000, p.8) is invalid in this case. This shows the complexities of these relationships and the cultural baggage that everyone involved carries.

A large number of volunteers were said to remain in contact with projects after their placements and project managers “send regular news to them” (Project manager B). Fowler’s (2001, p.11) assertion that “good development work needs alliances…solidarity” can be highlighted here in that it points to a continued involvement of some volunteers after their placement and promotes solidarity. This is in agreement with Wearing (2001) and Singh’s (2004) view of volunteering righting the wrongs of mass tourism and causing positive changes to the volunteer’s values and consciousness. Some volunteers visit occasionally and contribute financially to projects. Therefore, in this case, they are seen as sources of economic empowerment (Gillis 2007). There is a sense of solidarity as “with their help we can do something greater” (Project staff F). This disagrees with Simpson’s (2004a) accusation that volunteers allow material poverty to be excused. However, it does not assume that returned volunteers take action to combat broader economic structures that may oppress so-called developing countries. This is a matter for further research. It is also worth highlighting Tallantire’s (1993) arguments here about bestowing gifts, which may undermine hosts. This point is relevant for the entire ‘development’ agenda. But I am reminded of one participant’s response where she interprets the volunteer programme as beneficial in terms of financial contributions and also practical work: “but if both are lacking then there’s a negative picture” (BREADS staff B). In this case, the host community expect some benefits for facilitating this experience and in the majority of cases, receive such benefits.

5.4.1.2 “We know best” attitudes

Participants highlighted the need for the volunteer to be aware that development processes “take many years” (Project staff B). Respondents perceived the volunteer’s country as more advanced and “to bring them to this stage is a gradual process” (ibid). This is a modernisation approach to development (Rostow 1960). A minority of volunteers were perceived to be imposing ‘western value systems’ as they were “constantly comparing the situation to their own country” (BREADS staff B). There
seemed to be an awareness of the ‘threat’ of modernisation style processes of
development, which were being addressed by BREADS in their orientation process.
Staff spoke of informing volunteers that they “can’t change everything”. They are
encouraged to “understand the context...understand the culture...and then see where
you can pitch in” (BREADS staff B). This is more in line with participatory
approaches. BREADS’ policy also acknowledges areas for the volunteer to learn from
and about the project’s aims and objectives (see Appendix III, section 5).

The incident, resulting in a volunteer being asked to leave, was a particular negative
experience for the host community and really “damaged the project” (BREADS staff
A). The only positive reflection on this is that BREADS had clear policies in place to
deal with the situation. It does highlight the need for serious training and filtering on
the part of sending organisation and their responsibility to do so. It is not the place to
raise debates on the use of corporal punishment in schools, nor am I excusing it, but
the volunteer, in this case, was clearly not aware of this particular cultural issue nor of
the project’s policies on how to tackle it. His reaction, described as violent, highlighted
Clarke’s (1997) warning that where there is more intense contact, there is a risk of
greater damage to the host community, even though “in ten years it has been the only
case” (BREADS staff A). Perhaps he should have been made aware of Rahnema’s
(1997, p.397) question “what prompts me to intervene?” or ‘how should I intervene?’

According to host community participants, volunteers must have respect for the aims
of the project. In this instance project staff were engaged in “a slow process to educate
people” not to use corporal punishment (Project staff B). Volunteers were encouraged
to “see in an already existing structure where you can contribute” (BREADS staff B),
and be aware of the cultural differences before they arrive (Comhlámh 2006; Palmer
2002). Communication in this example was perceived to be key (see section 4.4.1.2).
Likewise, the cases of what is regarded as inappropriate behaviour, such as smoking in
public, stress the need for cultural awareness, sensitivity and respect.

5.4.2 The sending organisation and the host community
According to participants, BREADS have had good experiences with most sending
organisations and “there has been a good amount of communication built up”
(BREADS staff A). Where communication is lacking they have stopped working with
them as “we cannot operate like that”. However project managers felt they would like “to be able to give feedback directly” (Project manager E) to the sending organisation during placements. One manager highlighted an issue with the timing of placements for projects with academic focuses and felt that sending organisations needed to take this into consideration so that a better experience is possible for all. This highlights a communication problem between the project, BREADS and the sending organisation.

5.4.2.1 Training

Most, but not all, participants felt that training was sufficient as volunteers were aware of what was involved in terms of “food, the culture or the situation here in the locality” (Project manager E). Issues highlighted above with regard to smoking in public and prejudices about foreigners etc. are clearly areas that need to be addressed by some organisations. Despite these instances the majority felt that training is done really well, “through a serious process” (BREADS staff C) where peer mentoring and returned volunteers are involved (see section 4.4.2.1). Where trainers have limited experience of Indian culture, participants felt it was best to have “someone from this culture” to help prepare them and to address prejudices as “volunteers who are training need many different perspectives of experiences” (BREADS staff A).

Some organisations are respected for “the filtering they do” and this is seen in “the quality of their volunteers…who are highly motivated” (BREADS staff B). It was stressed that filtering and assessing motivations were the responsibility of the sending organisations and must be done well. These are issues and challenges but in the majority of projects in this case study, participants felt that the sending organisations approach pre-departure training responsibly. This is a criteria noted in BREADS’ policy which stresses training as a requirement. In light of Tourism Concern’s (2007) survey, where only half of those surveyed had pre-departure training, this suggests that the BREADS’ experience is approached more responsibly than others. However, as project manager C noted, “it’s like a teacher taking a class…some [volunteers] are a bit slow” and as seen above this can have a negative effect on communities.
5.4.2.2 Funding

BREADS and the sending organisations do not have a “conditional clause for funding” but it is clear from the findings “90% of our volunteers” want to donate after their experiences (Gillis 2007). However, BREADS highlight issues with certain projects where it is unofficially expected. This highlights the perception of this experience as a two way process (Potter 2004) where the volunteer and the host community should benefit for it to be considered a worthwhile experience. The volunteer’s contribution can be in terms of practical work or funds but as noted, “If both are lacking then there’s a negative picture”.

5.4.2.3 Who decides?

BREADS are seen as the ones who have most control over placements as they receive applications from the sending organisations and they search for a placement based on suitability of the volunteer, their skills and the project’s needs. Project managers had mixed feelings on this with some saying they could decide from a list of volunteers who they wanted and others who felt it was BREADS who decide. Despite these differences it is clear that the host community is generally in control here and not the sending organisation or the volunteer. BREADS decide who and where and have “clear policies which show criteria we would like from sending organisations”. If volunteers cannot commit for a specific time period, those applications are also turned down. This prevents a focus on the sending organisation’s needs in terms of placements as highlighted by Morgan (2006; cf. Simpson 2004a; Smith and Duffy 2003).

Some project staff noted that they are not involved in this consultation process and this may be an area of concern, especially when they are living and working with volunteers. The perception that new projects were requesting volunteers because “they think it’s an advantage for them, it’s needed because our brothers in practical training are declining in number” shows that both national and international volunteers were needed to assist with the work. This corresponds to Lee’s (2006) argument that volunteering is a productive activity assessed by its contribution to maintain the well being of society. Here, it is worth highlighting possible issues of dependency.
5.5 Conclusion

The volunteer programme as run by BREADS is considered by most participants to be a positive experience. The work of the majority of volunteers is valued by the host community and also their continued involvement with projects is perceived as promoting solidarity and individual citizenship. In these cases it is not only the volunteer who benefits. The host community perceive that they are contributing to a learning experience for the volunteer that creates an awareness of global development issues. BREADS note that it is a new concept for them and one that is still evolving and trying to improve. In a world where stress is put on “market economy”, one participant notes that the willingness to volunteer is extremely important and contributes to cultural capital for all involved.
Chapter Six

Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to hear the voice of the host community and their perceptions of the role of volunteers in development. In light of the debates noted in chapter two, I set out to explore the question of who benefits from this programme. Is it a responsible volunteering experience? This case study is just one example and it is not possible to generalise the conclusions made to all volunteer programmes. Nevertheless, in this chapter I highlight strengths and challenges, which may add to the ongoing debate on the role of short-term international volunteers in development. This chapter will also suggest recommendations for this volunteer programme and areas for further research.

6.2 The Role of Short-Term International Volunteers in Development

6.2.1 Strengths

It is evident from the findings that the host community perceive this experience to have a profound effect on the attitudes and lives of the volunteers. The volunteers in this programme are perceived to be learners and the experience as one that changes them. It is a process of ‘conscientisation’, creating a new awareness and understanding which contributes to a ‘pedagogy of the non-oppressed’. Motivations vary, perceived as both altruistic and self-centric, regardless of which, the experience is seen as a positive one for the host community and the volunteer. This is in line with the principles set out in Comhlámh’s Charter (2006), which aims to promote a relationship of solidarity between all those involved (see section 2.6).

BREADS’ Volunteer Programme gives an opportunity for the work of the host community and the situations of local people to be made known to communities around the world as the volunteer is perceived to raise awareness in their home countries, a possible development education tool. Criticisms of volunteering revolve
around the host community having no voice and being exploited. The respondents in this case study perceive the opposite effect.

The majority of volunteers are involved in development processes which are not top-down transfers of knowledge, but are participatory in nature as they work alongside local communities in a capacity building process, in the short-term. They are involved in a sharing of resources and skills and are seen to play a role of someone who serves. The concept of ‘presence’ with children in these projects emerged as an important aspect of their role. The perceived ‘service mentality’ of the volunteer means that a more equal relationship can be achieved. A perceived majority of volunteers, through their continued involvement as financial contributors to projects and their service on placement, contribute to building relationships of trust and solidarity between people located at opposite ends of the economic spectrum.

This programme is perceived as broadening cultural and social experiences, enhancing the worldview and cultural capital of all those involved. As volunteers live with local communities and depend on local networks, this contributes to a relationship that can “disempower uppers” (Chambers, 1997, p.234). BREADS and the sending organisations of Don Bosco Youth Net are facilitating an experience that challenges the criticisms of short-term international volunteering noted in chapter two. BREADS have clear policies highlighting criteria that they expect from sending organisations and this ensures, in most cases, that the host community benefits as well as the volunteer - it is the hosts who are in control. The pre-departure training offered by organisations goes some way to ensure that relationships of superiority and top down models of development processes are not brought to the fore.

6.2.2 Issues and Challenges
While the majority of responses focused on the good intentions of volunteers, their sense of justice and serving attitude, negative experiences of some participants were highlighted. Although in a minority of cases, it emphasises the responsibilities that lie with the sending organisations if this experience is to be a responsible one for every instance of volunteering. The negative experiences revolved around volunteers who were unwilling to accept the aims of projects, incapable of understanding that development processes take time and who were leaning more towards modernisation
style processes of development, with Euro-centric focuses. These cases did not conform to the principles outlined in Comhlámh’s charter (2006). 5% of volunteers were perceived to be more concerned about travelling around India and one volunteer severely damaged the reputation of a project. This has left feelings of negativity and resentment towards him, his sending organisation and his home country. In these instances the experience exploited the hosts (Hutnyk 2006) and link with Simpson’s critique of volunteering as an educational system that is complicit with prejudice and oppression (2004a). In some projects, communication is lacking between BREADS and the project or between the volunteer and the project. Some project managers would like more communication with the sending organisations in order to give feedback directly. These are minor instances and as BREADS staff C notes, they are “trying to evolve...and see the places where we can grow” in this experience.

It is not possible for this study to examine whether or not returned volunteers remain involved in ‘development’ after their placements. Therefore the change in attitude perceived by the host community may or may not continue once the volunteer returns to their home country. This would be an interesting area for further research. Also, while their perceived financial contributions to projects are seen as a benefit, this may highlight issues of dependency and produce a different kind of power relationship that was not fully explored in this research. However, we can apply this criticism to the entire ‘development’ agenda and slip into the critical extreme of assuming that nothing works.

6.3 Overall Conclusion

As noted by RVA (1991), it is indeed ironic that those who benefit from underdevelopment offer themselves as a part of the cure. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of short-term international volunteering is growing and probably here to stay. Cannon and King (2005, p.13) argue that we must challenge the assumptions of ‘superiority’ and the status quo in our volunteering work, and encourage solidarity between peoples “in order to achieve justice, equality and human rights – in a word, development – for all”. The role of the volunteer in this case study is perceived to be that of a learner and co-facilitator whose attitudes are changed because of the experience, regardless of their original motivations.
As Fowler (2001, p.11) notes: “good development work needs alliances, contracts, counterparts, compacts, fellowship, sisterhood, solidarity and straight forward, honest to goodness international co-operations across the board”. The perceptions of the host community in this study suggest that 90-95% of their volunteers contribute to these relationships of solidarity and are involved in a responsible volunteer experience.

Comhlámh’s Charter (2006) and its principles are incorporated into this experience in the majority of cases as there is a strong perception of:

- Pre-departure training with support during placement;
- Clear role descriptions and expectations outlined by BREADS;
- Volunteers for the most part respect local culture and adopt the role of learners;
- Acting in a professional manner in terms of their commitment and service to projects;
- Channelling their experiences abroad into society on return, in terms of the perceived cultural capital for their home communities and continued involvement through continuous contact and, in some cases, financial contributions to projects;

For whose benefit? Potentially everyone can benefit in this case but it must be noted that this is an unusual and in some respects a unique case for many reasons, including: its context; the shared values of hosts and sending organisations; pre-departure training; clear policies which are in place; the relationships between BREADS and the sending organisations as part of a worldwide FBO and in some instances a returned volunteer programme. These all contribute to this case study being an example of responsible volunteering:

*I’d say most volunteers haven’t got what they were looking for in that their expectations were not necessarily the right ones...But I’d also say that hardly any of them were sorry for what they experienced in those projects...The happiest thing for us is the feedback that they are so grateful for the experience because it has changed young people a lot, in their perspectives to life, to their own situations, their lifestyles and attitudes that they have back home. That is the biggest change they experience and I believe we contribute to them.*

(BREADS staff C)
6.4 Recommendations

- Participants felt that a more regular evaluation of volunteers on placement, quarterly, would be a benefit to all involved in order to tackle communication gaps in projects.

- BREADS noted that some sending organisations have support staff for the volunteer while they are on placement and this “makes a big difference”. BOVA ensure that all volunteers have a support worker in their home country while they are on placement and this is something I recommend all sending organisations should consider.

- More communication between the project and the sending organisation while the volunteer is on placement. Participants seem keen to give feedback directly to the sending organisations so they can have some sort of appraisal during the placement.

- In projects with academic focuses, unqualified teachers should be adopt a more supportive role in the classroom, such as a learning support assistant rather than a teacher, or involve themselves in extra-curricular activities.

- Filtering processes are essential and sending organisations have a duty to ensure that they send volunteers who are really committed and who are fully aware of what their placement will involve.

- Sending organisations and volunteers should incorporate a policy or charter similar to Comhlámh’s Volunteer Charter (2006).

- Sending organisations should adopt a follow up programme for returned volunteers so that their experiences can be reflected upon, reverse culture shock addressed and a space where there’s a possibility to channel the experience into active citizenship (BOVA 2010c). “If we only go overseas to help, but do not work to challenge the root causes of global injustice, our actions will not help to prevent the recurrence of present problems” (Comhlámh 2006, Principle 6).
6.5 Areas for further research:

- A study of returned volunteers who have been on placement with BREADS. Did their experience create a lasting change in their attitudes and lifestyles? Have they remained involved in ‘development’? This may be in campaigning on global issues, an increased interested in development issues, continued involvement with sending organisations and/or their host community in India.

- A study of volunteers currently on placement with BREADS to hear their experiences and challenges. Do they feel aptly prepared for the experience? What were their expectations and have they or are they changing while on placement?

- A study of a returned volunteer programme, such as that which BOVA offers (2010c). What is the role of the returned volunteer in ‘development’?
Appendix I


BREADS operate in the states of Kerala and Karnataka
Appendix II

Projects of BREADS in Karnataka and Kerala states

Map from www.breadsbangalore.org
INTRODUCTION

Volunteering is to be understood as the outcome of our education. It is an integral part of the ‘vocation’ dimension of our youth ministry. Life does not end with self-realization. It goes beyond self-realization and finds its fulfilment in self-transcendence. Volunteering or service enriches both the receiver and giver. It gives meaning to life!

The concept of volunteering emerges out of the truth that we are not the owners of our life, the resources we possess - the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual gifts! We are just stewards! We are called to be contributions! We contribute towards the enhancement of life wherever and in whatever form we find it! Volunteering is the noble expression of service! It is service with love! Voluntary service makes the world a happier place to live in! It is through self-giving that a person achieves self-realization. Volunteering is the most concrete fruit of a Christian education. It is an expression of our social responsibility. We promote the spirit of volunteering at all stages of education.

“Young people especially long to have their abilities and talents “awakened and discovered”. Volunteers want to be asked, they want to be told: “I need you” – “You can do it!” How good it feels to hear words like these! In their human simplicity, they unwittingly point us to the God who has called each of us into being and given us a personal task, the God who needs each of us and awaits our response.”

“Without volunteer service, society and the common good could not, cannot and will not endure. A readiness to be at the service of others is something which surpasses the calculus of outlay and return: it shatters the rules of a market economy. The value of human beings cannot be judged by purely economic criteria. Without volunteers, then, no state can be built up. A society’s progress and worth constantly depend on people who do more than what is strictly their duty.” Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Volunteer Associations of Austria - Vienna, Sunday, 9 September 2007.

“We consider every young person a potential volunteer, that is a person growing towards a vision of life as a gift, as a vocation, and therefore towards the acquisition of an interior disposition for service; a person in a permanent state of formation towards full human and Christian maturity. The task of guiding and providing support along this journey is the normal role of Salesian Youth Ministry. Consequently, in the specific process of analysing the development and the various expressions of voluntary service, we consider it necessary for us to refer to the overall framework of Salesian Pastoral Ministry.” Salesian Voluntary Service 3.

AREAS FOR VOLUNTEERING

The following are a few areas that may be considered by volunteers to help out.

- Salesian Assistance
- Tuition
- Teaching
- Looking after altar servers
- Health workers
- Music tutors
- Trade assistants etc.
VOLUNTEERS
Volunteering is a call that goes beyond all boundaries. It reaches out to every human being. We have numerous volunteers in our settings! They spend their resources even without being solicited and with no expectations of any kind! What a marvellous phenomenon! While encouraging them to continue their noble mission we promote volunteering in all our settings starting with our own children. Children can be introduced to volunteering and with much advantage to themselves and to the community. “We move from the preoccupation of fulfilling all our personal needs to a life of genuine service that gives meaning to our lives and a true sense of fulfilment! This a journey!!"

DOMESTIC VOLUNTEERS
By domestic volunteers is meant volunteers who spring up in our neighbourhood, in our state, in our country! Their number far exceeds the foreign volunteers! While we tend to take note of international volunteers for whatever reasons, we should not forget the domestic volunteers! In fact these are the ones who sustain our works most of the time! They are with us though most often we take their services for granted!

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING
Volunteering helps to:
1. Meet people and make new friends
2. Put spare time to good use
3. Gain new experiences or learn new skills
4. Do something enjoyable
5. Make use of existing skills
6. Build confidence
7. Take on new responsibilities
8. Be valued, appreciated and feel useful
9. Gain a sense of achievement
10. Do something of special or personal interest.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT
It is important that especially in the present context a code of conduct for Volunteers is drawn up and made known to the volunteers and to the members of the community and members of the staff.

A VOLUNTEER MUST:
- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.
- Avoid situations where he or she is alone with children and/or youth at activities.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children, youth or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to children and/or youth without prior written approval from the supervisor.
- Report suspected abuse to the appropriate supervisor. Failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities (by the competent authority) is, according to the law, a misdemeanour and invites punishment.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
- Will honour the confidentiality of service users, clients, volunteers, staff, sponsors and donors.
- Take advantage of opportunities such as seminars and workshops offered by the agency.
A VOLUNTEER MUST NOT:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the campus.
- Use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering.
- Use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Pose any health risk to children and/or youth through fevers or other contagious situations.
- Strike, spank, shake or slap children and/or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten or degrade children and/or youth.
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Take children/youth to private rooms.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and/or youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Disclose highly personal information of any child/youth/ agency to anyone who is not authorized by DON BOSCO to have access to such information.

“The reality of our interdependence makes it vital to recognize each role as a stewardship. A stewardship is a trust. A steward is one called to exercise responsible care over possessions entrusted to him or her. We are stewards over our time, our talents, our resources. We have stewardships at work, in the community, and at home. Stewardship involves a sense of being accountable to someone or something higher than self—our creator, future generations, or society in general” Stephen R Covey.

RIGHTS OF VOLUNTEERS

- Volunteers have the right to expect that the organization they work for:
- Assign suitable tasks which respect their training and experience, both personal and professional, as well as their personal interests.
- Furnish precise job descriptions, stating tasks, responsibilities and role in the organization.
- Indicate clearly what their schedule is and to whom they report.
- Offer suitable training for the jobs assigned.
- Offer regular ongoing training allowing volunteers to update their knowledge or take on greater responsibility.
- Offer the chance to be promoted or to be transferred to new projects, or to other activities allowing them to acquire more varied experience.
- Treat them as full members of the organization and consider them as colleagues rather than mere unpaid help.
- Offer support, resources and structure.
- Offer regular feedback on their work.
- Listen to what they have to say.
- Furnish proper supervision by competent and patient individuals who have the time to offer advice and guidance to them.
- Furnish a workspace suitable for the assigned task.
- Allow them to participate in the planning and development of new projects, and encourage them to make suggestions with the assurance that their opinions will be respected.
- Show appropriate and tangible recognition of volunteer effort (e.g., through offering new responsibilities, marks or appreciation for their service.)
- Inform them about the organization’s policies with respect to certain benefits available to them, such as the reimbursement of expenses.
- Offer them any other information which may concern them.
RIGHTS OF THE ORGANIZATION

An organization has the right to expect that its volunteers:

- Be open and honest about their motivations and goals.
- Understand what a job requires before accepting it.
- Carry out their tasks efficiently and honestly.
- Accept guidance and supervision from the person in charge of volunteers.
- Participate in any training offered by the organization.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Express to the volunteer coordinator their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job assigned and suggest improvements or changes.
- Notify the coordinator as soon as possible if they are unable to attend a training session or carry out their assigned duties.

Please Note:
What we have stated above holds good for all volunteers both national and international. However, we have certain additional policy with regard to international volunteers taking into consideration their special status in the country.

Salesian Province of Bangalore
Policy for International Volunteers

1. Introduction
Volunteer Placements are an important part of the activities in our province. Giving people across the globe, an opportunity to work in our settings to gain an experience makes us instrumental in touching the lives of many and changing their outlook towards life.

2. Objective of International Volunteering
To enable people from different countries gain an experience of the Salesian spirit and work among the young through their presence and skills as well as avail the services of the volunteer to support the activities of the project.

3. Definitions of Terms

3.1 Volunteer: A mature and committed individual above 18 years of age, who is willing to be of service to any project in our province and accepted for a placement period that may vary from one month to one year.

3.2 Volunteer Placement: The process of placing a volunteer in the projects of our province from a minimum period of one month to one or two years with follow-up.

3.3 Sending Agency: The international organization that selects, prepares and applies for placement of young people from their own countries in our projects.

3.4 Receiving Project: The project where the volunteer is received for his or her period of placement.

3.5 Coordinating Office: The office or organisation that coordinates the placement process with the sending agency, the volunteer and the receiving project.

4. General Norms:
The Salesian Province of Bangalore is happy and willing to receive international volunteers to work in the province. There will be one coordinating office in the province (for the present BREADS), where documentation regarding every volunteer coming to the province will be maintained. When aspiring volunteers contact individual Salesians or houses in the province, they will be asked to contact BREADS which will try to give preference to placing them in the
houses the volunteer has contacted, if the volunteer so wishes. But the final decision will rest with BREADS. Individuals or communities will not accept volunteers for placement in other Salesian Houses or other NGOs.

4.1 Volunteers will be accepted into the province only through credible reference preferably through the Salesian organization. The request of individual volunteers will be processed only through these organizations.

4.2 Volunteers are to be placed only in houses which have adequate facility to receive them. Permission of the Provincial is to be got by the house before receiving volunteers for the first time (Regulation no. 45)

4.3 The volunteer and the agency sending them will be informed in detail about the project placed, expected tasks etc. Forms on which details have to provided will be sent to the volunteers.

4.4 On arrival, the coordinating office will give orientation and induction to the volunteers. It is preferred that the volunteers arrive to the projects through Bangalore.

4.5 It is recommended the volunteers arrive in pairs of the same gender, if they have to be placed in the same project. This will make the placement experience easier for both the receiving project as well as volunteers.

4.6 Each receiving project will formulate a volunteer policy which will be further monitored by the coordinating office.

4.7 The coordinating office will assess and decide which local projects can receive the volunteers.

4.8 Decisions on terminating placement, or change of placement in the event of situations that demand such action, will be taken by the coordinating office.

4.9 Financial help or support is not expected from volunteers unless they willingly do so. When there is support from the sending agency this will be received by the coordinating office in the province.

4.10. If volunteers want to make contribution to a particular project, they can do so through BREADS or directly with information to BREADS with very clear objective and purpose for the same.

4.11. The receiving project must keep the volunteers who have been there informed of the activities in the projects after their period of placement.

5. Role and the functions of the volunteer
Depending on the abilities, skills and interests of the volunteers, there are possibilities of placement in our various projects. The placements of the volunteers also depend on the convenient timings at the projects.

5.1 Learning about the local situation of the people.
5.2 Interacting with local young people.
5.3 Living with child labourers/street children.
5.4 Teaching Music, Arts, or crafts for the children helping the children with their lessons.
5.5 Organizing games and recreational activities for the children.
5.6 Participating in the activities of the children (Monitoring during study, games, daily chores)
5.7 Spreading awareness of our work.
5.8 Contributing to communication and publication materials.
5.9 Assisting the project with documentation, reporting etc.
5.10 Facilitating to collect/donate materials for the projects.
5.11 Contributing to the project with specific qualification and skills.
5.12 Operating under the supervision of the local supervisor and will refer to the coordinating office for any required assistance.
5.13 Informing the supervisor regarding holiday plans and dates of absence from the house.
5.14 Making an evaluation on the formats given by the coordinating office at the intervals agreed upon and surely at the end of the placement.
6. Role of the coordinating office BREADS

6.1 Screening, processing and documenting applications.
6.2 Assessing and placing the volunteers in the projects.
6.3 Offering placement possibilities and providing possible details of the project, he or she will be placed in.
6.4 Corresponding with the sending agency, the volunteer as well as the receiving project.
6.5 Receiving the volunteer on his or her arrival.
6.6 Orientating the volunteer about the placement.
6.7 Making interim evaluations and follow-up through mails, calls or visits to understand the progress of the volunteer, both with the volunteer as well as his or her placement supervisor.
6.8 Taking the necessary steps to change or terminate the placement of the volunteer, if the volunteer or the project is unhappy.
6.9 Making a final evaluation with the volunteer as well as his or her placement supervisor.
6.10 Giving the volunteer an experience certificate.
6.11 Giving the volunteer guidance with travel and holidays, if required.

7. Role of the sending agency

7.1 Providing basic information to the province on the standard application form.
7.2 Organizing all matters related to obtaining visa, travel documentation, preventive medication, insurance etc.
7.3 Preparing the volunteers through the trainings offered or organized by the Salesian NGOs in their countries.
7.4 Orienting the volunteer regarding Don Bosco, and the Salesian pedagogy.
7.5 Encouraging the volunteer to clarify all questions regarding the placement and provide any additional information required.
7.6 Monitoring the placement experience through formal reporting procedures are agreed upon intervals.
7.7 Verifying on the credentials of applicants before accepting to send them as volunteers. This has to be certified to the province in the process of working out the placement details.

8. Role of the receiving project

8.1 Ensuring that normal food and accommodation for the volunteers in or around the institution is made available. Accommodation for volunteers will be arranged in the projects within the guidelines of the congregation (Constitution no. 56) and under other specific directive from the province.
8.2 Working towards preparing separate quarters for volunteers to stay, if there are volunteers on a regular basis.
8.3 Preparing a formal volunteer policy, the copies of which will be available at the coordinating office as well as to any volunteer. This will be the guiding document for the placement experience.
8.4 Organizing induction and training programme in the initial days to assist proper insertion of the volunteer to the project. This will also include specification of roles, responsibilities, schedules of work, local situations, customs etc.
8.5 Supervising and guiding the volunteers during their placement. The frequency and modalities will be worked out during the induction.
8.6 Informing the coordinating office when the volunteer needs to move out for reasons of holidays, visa renewal etc.
8.7 Monitoring the placement experience, offering constructive feedback to the volunteers and informing the coordinating office of any issue that needs to be addressed at the provincial level.
8.8 Informing the coordinating office of the revisit of previous volunteers.
8.9 Informing the coordinating office regarding any contribution made directly by a volunteer.
8.10 Sending a report of the use of funds given by volunteers to them.
9. Conclusion
This policy hopes to pave way for professional management of volunteers to the Sacred Heart Province of Bangalore.

WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO

1. Encourage volunteering among our children. The attitude of volunteering has to be promoted at every stage of growth.

2. Make education to volunteering part of the VOCATION dimension of our EPP.

3. Make a list of all the volunteers in your setting and honour them in public for their selfless service and contribution.

4. Organize a “Volunteers Day” in order to promote volunteering.

5. Organize special moments of prayer, reflection and celebration with the volunteers.

6. Offer avenues for volunteering.

7. Organize training programmes for volunteers.

8. Consider volunteers as part of our ‘family’ and include them in the whole process of decision-making.

9. Pray for our volunteers. This will create a sense of gratitude for their contribution.

10. Follow a policy for volunteers.
Appendix IV

Comhlámh’s Volunteer Charter
“Encouraging good practice in
Volunteering for global development”

What is the Volunteer Charter?
The Charter is a guide for people who are going to volunteer overseas in developing countries. It sets out seven principles that aim to encourage responsible, responsive international volunteering. Each of these principles contains a list of questions to help you make sure that you have thought about the issues raised, and to ensure that you know why they are important.

Who developed it?
The Charter has been drawn up by Comhlámh, the Irish Association of Development Workers. Comhlámh has over 30 years’ experience of engaging with overseas volunteers and development workers.

How was it developed?
Through extensive consultations with the three main groups involved in volunteer placements: volunteers, sending organisations, and host projects.

Why has it been drawn up?
In recent years, there has been a growing interest among Irish people in volunteering in developing countries. More and more people are going overseas as volunteers, sometimes for very short periods. Although there can be many differences between the work done on short-term and longer-term volunteering placements, all international volunteers will be engaging with the same broader issues. These include having realistic expectations about what volunteering can achieve, and adopting the role of learner and guest while overseas. The Charter encourages people to think about these issues and to place their volunteering experiences within the wider context of global development. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the improvement of the volunteering experiences of international volunteers and, ultimately, to the quality of life for host communities affected by volunteering. It does not replace sending organisations’ and
host projects’ specific guidelines and rules for volunteers, but rather complements them.

**What about the responsibilities of sending organisations?**

A Code of Good Practice for Sending Organisations has also been developed. This sets out the responsibilities of organisations that arrange volunteer placements, including some of the steps they take to support the Volunteer Charter. Organisations that have signed up to the Code will be willing to provide copies of this Charter to volunteers, and to discuss the Code in exchange.

**Why should volunteers support the Charter?**

By agreeing to sign the Charter, you will be showing your support for the principles it sets out. As a volunteer, your attitude to your placement and to your host project and community will be crucial to the success of the work you will be involved with. Your support will help to ensure a spirit of partnership, solidarity and respect between you, your sending organisation, and the host project and community with which you volunteer.

**Glossary of terms**

**Developing countries**

We have many different names for those countries that are not as wealthy as ours, and all of them are problematic! These include “Third World”, “poor countries”, “Global South” or “South”. In this Charter, we use the term “developing countries” because it is the most generally accepted term and because we encourage volunteers to focus on issues of development when thinking about overseas volunteering.

**Development**

Development is a complex issue, with many different and sometimes contentious definitions. A basic perspective equates economic growth with development. The United Nations Development Programme uses a more detailed definition: according to them, development is “to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community”. Achieving human development is linked to a third perspective of development, which views it as freeing people from obstacles that affect their ability to develop their own lives and communities. Development,
therefore, is empowerment: it is about local people taking control of their own lives, expressing their own demands and finding their own solutions to their problems.

**Host communities:** These are people with whom volunteers work and live while undertaking their overseas placements.

**Host projects:** These are organisations or community groups in the destination country that receive volunteers.

**Sending organizations:** These are agencies, organisations or commercial companies that arrange volunteer placements in developing countries. All have offices outside the destination country and recruit volunteers through these.

**Principal 1: Volunteers agree to inform themselves about all relevant issues relating to their placement**

Have you:

**Spent time considering your motivations for wanting to volunteer overseas?**

Before making a decision about whether to volunteer overseas, it’s important to consider your motivations for wanting to go. Motivations can have a big impact on your expectations for what a placement will be like and, therefore, on what your experiences will be when you go overseas.

**Thought about the issues that will inform the context in which your placement will take place?**

For example, have you considered issues of global inequality and poverty, and how these might impact on the work of your host project? The idea of development is a complex one that is affected by a wide range of issues. While these can sometimes appear to be abstract and theoretical, the impact that they have on people’s everyday lives is very real. Having some knowledge of the bigger picture will help you to understand the forces that might shape events at the local level of your placement.

**Made contact with former volunteers, with the help of your sending organisation?**

Talking to former volunteers can help you get a better idea about the ethos of the organisation you’ll be volunteering with, the type of work you may be doing, and some of the issues that you will encounter while in your placement.
Examined the information resources provided or suggested by your sending organisation?
This may include information about the project you will be working with, the area or country where you will be located, the history and development of the project that you will volunteer with, etc. All of these resources will help to give you a better idea about the work you will be doing and the area in which you will be volunteering.

Spent some time researching other information about your placement?
For example, this could be information sourced through using the Internet, books, and newspapers

“Get to know the area you are visiting through the Internet or books. In particular try to get to understand the people, their traits and cultural differences. Know what you are going to be doing and why you are doing it. Ask others who have been in that particular country what to expect. Know the organisation that is arranging your placement” Ryan, volunteer in Belarus.

“The potential volunteer might want to think about what impact their presence in a community/orphanage/school for a period of one month to one year will have on the lives of the supposed beneficiaries. In the case of short-term placements, how does it feel for them to have a foreigner come into their lives for such a short period of time? It is something that volunteers should be prepared for, i.e., not to necessarily expect open-armed warm welcomes at every turn and so to think of what ways they can engage people, be prepared to be patient and give people time to accept them”. Fionuala, volunteer in Guatemala

“Sending organisations vary hugely with regard to their core values and aims, their motivations in sending volunteers overseas, their commitments to host organisations and the resources they are willing to invest in training and preparation of volunteers. Research the sending organisation fully before you commit yourself and ensure that you are happy about how the money you contribute will be spent and what sort of training and support you will receive at home and overseas.” Suzie, volunteer in the Dominican Republic
**Principal 2: Volunteers agree to: Familiarise themselves thoroughly with their role description before departure**

Have you:

**Read and signed the role description provided by your sending organisation?**

Familiarising yourself with the role description will help to give you a better idea about the exact aims of the work and the amount of time each week you will be expected to commit to the project. The presence of a detailed job description may also help to ensure that your work has been planned, and that there is a need for your presence.

**Asked the organisation any questions that you have about the role?**

Ensuring that you have as much information as possible about the role can help you to make certain that you are prepared for all aspects of the work. For example, find out as much as possible about as what your living conditions will be like overseas, what your working hours will be, whether in-country support will be available, etc.

**Taken part in all training and induction for your role that is provided by the organisation?**

Participation in training and induction provided by an organisation is a very important part of a volunteer placement. Training may be provided pre-departure and/or in-country. Useful training topics that have been highlighted by former volunteers include language skills, training on working with children and vulnerable adults, an introduction to development issues, country and programme orientation, health and safety briefings, and anti-racism training.

**Where possible, and with the assistance of your sending organisation, discussed the role with previous volunteers who worked on the project?**

The opportunity to discuss your role with a former volunteer who worked on the same project can provide an invaluable source of information. If you are continuing the work of another volunteer, it can be very helpful to make contact with them to talk about what they did in the role, and their suggestions for future developments. “You can’t be too prepared. It’s enough of a challenge to be in a new country with new people: you want the job to be as straightforward as possible” Joe, volunteer in Sri Lanka.

“I think one of the most important things I ever heard during any of my pre-departure trainings was “If we fail to plan, we plan to fail!” Essentially, in my
opinion, the more conscientious and dedicated to fully preparing yourself before departure you are, the better an experience you will have overall from every point of view, and the more effective you will be in your work.” Andrew, volunteer in India.

**NB: If we fail to plan, we plan to fail**

**Before you go:** Write down your thoughts on your motives for volunteering and on your expectations about what will happen.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

**Principal 3: Volunteers agree to: Respect local customs and adopt the role of learners and guests**

**Have you:**

**Thought about what your expectations are for the placement?**

Through considering what you expect to achieve in your placement, and being as realistic as possible about this, you can start to prepare yourself for working and living with your host community. Volunteers can have a huge impact on projects, and your preparedness on arrival both for the work and for living in what may be a very different culture can have a big impact on your contribution to a project’s success. It’s also important to remember that many volunteers express frustration at how little can be achieved in the face of large problems, and to try to adjust your expectations accordingly. Remember that a large part of being a volunteer is about forging relationships with other people and taking advantage of opportunities to learn from other cultures. Host projects say that it is important to remember that volunteering is a mutual exchange, and that it’s not only about personal gain.

**Considered how you can make sure that you will be sensitive to the local culture?**

By talking to former volunteers and familiarising yourself with the culture in which you will be working, you can begin to prepare yourself for some of the cultural differences you may encounter in your placement. This may include being prepared for the living conditions, for changes in diet, and for different ways of socialising. Remember that people may be confused or uncertain about why you are working in their community, and what you are trying to achieve. Be prepared to answer their
questions, to spend time with them, and to build relationships based on understanding, not assumptions.

**Taken part in training or induction about intercultural issues provided by your organisation?**

Participation in any training and induction on intercultural issues that your sending organisation provides can give you further insights into important topics to be aware of while in your placement.

**Agreed to try to learn some of the local language?**

Former volunteers and host projects have repeatedly stressed the importance of trying to learn at least some of the local language of the host community. Being able to communicate with your hosts will help you to make the most of your time in a placement.

**Agreed to respect and work to uphold the aims of your host project?**

As a volunteer, you may be very involved in the day-to-day life of your host community, and you need to be willing from the outset to assist with achieving the project’s aims. You may be seen as a representative of the organisation with which you are working and, as such, will need to be familiar, and in agreement, with the aims of the project.

**Agreed to respect staff and other volunteers who work with your host project?**

Some host organisations have stated that problems can arise from the fact that volunteers may not realise that differences exist between the way of doing things in the host country and what they are accustomed to at home. Respecting the expertise and experience of other staff and volunteers, and accepting that things may be done in different ways, are a very important part of the volunteer experience. Organisational structures and management systems may be different in other cultures, and volunteers may need to bear this in mind throughout a placement. It is vital to work with the community you go to – there can be disastrous results if local communities and organisations are not asked for their input.

“Some volunteers refuse to eat our local food; we have had some volunteers demand more than what they signed up for; some volunteers try to go outside the agreed /chosen programme, interfering with the hosts’ activities; some
volunteers refuse to adhere to the rules and regulations in the host family”
Jubilee Ventures, host organisation in Ghana.

“In my time in Guatemala, all our relationships and fondest memories were
made while sharing meals. This could never have worked without being
prepared to eat tortillas, beans and chili three times a day for five months”
Mark, volunteer in Guatemala.

Travel with the open-minded attitude that you are ‘here to learn’. Travel with the open-
mined attitude rather than the narrow-focused ‘here to help’. This will make you that
you are ‘here to learn’ rather than ask the questions from which you will learn, rather
than assuming the narrow-focused ‘here to help’. This will make you ask questions
from which you will learn, rather than assuming that you always know the answers.

**Principle 4: Volunteers agree to: Act always in a professional manner
and be flexible and adaptable while in their placement**

**Do you agree to:**

**Always approach your placement in a professional manner?**
Returned volunteers have pointed out that some volunteers may take a less than
professional attitude to their placement. For example, they may turn up late, leave
early, not respect local dress codes, or behave in a manner that is more appropriate for
a holiday than for providing a service to a local community. By agreeing to have a
professional attitude towards your placement from the beginning, these issues can be
avoided. It is also advisable to be aware of your organisation/host community’s
procedures for raising issues of concern, should any arise during your placement.

**Stick to the role description that you were given?**
A good role description will have been developed following consultations between the
sending organisation and the host organisation, with inputs from previous volunteers. It
should therefore reflect what a volunteer is most needed for, and how she or he can
best contribute to the aims of a project. Attempting to change this description, without
proper consultation with and permission from the relevant people, could affect the
project’s outcomes.

**Fulfill the minimum working hours, agreed at the start of your placement?**
Sometimes, volunteers may not complete the hours that they consented to at the
beginning of their work. This can lead to problems in terms of work not being
completed, and also of lowering morale amongst other volunteers and staff. Be aware of what is requested within any placement that you are signing up to, and consider whether you are willing to undertake this before making a final commitment.

**Within reason, be flexible in response to needs as they arise throughout your placement?**

While it is very important to adhere to your role description, one essential characteristic emphasised by former volunteers is the need to be flexible when undertaking a volunteer placement. There can be a number of reasons why you may need to be flexible: it could be to fill in if there is nobody else available for the job; to adapt to changes caused by a lack of resources; or simply to respond to the changes in a project’s objectives that take place over time.

**Reasons why volunteers have made an impact are:**

- Long-term commitment that they are willing to give to the organisation;
- Patience to understand and assimilate the development context and responses;
- Openness and initiative in identifying areas of work and making positive contributions; and cultural adaptability. Gram Vikas, Host Organisation, India.

“We as volunteers should be honoured to be invested with the responsibility organisations delegate to us, and as such we should always treat our volunteering placement with the utmost professionalism. We are ambassadors for ourselves, of course, but also for our country and will set a precedent for any volunteers who may follow us. And, of course, we would all like to be remembered as hardworking, dedicated, fun, and a very helpful addition to the team. It’s important not to underestimate what can be achieved with the right motives, energy, enthusiasm, open-mindedness, common sense and a willingness to learn from others” Andrew, volunteer in India

**Principal 5: Volunteers agree to take due care with their personal safety and physical and mental health**

**Have you:**

**Made certain that you have relevant health and travel insurance for your overseas placement?**

Some sending organisations will provide this insurance, while others will not. Find out whether you need to make arrangements yourself, and ensure that you have proper
coverage before going abroad for a placement. Be aware of what your insurance covers, and how to access assistance, if necessary.

**Made certain that you have all the relevant vaccinations for the area in which you will be volunteering?**

Again, these will be provided by some organisations, while others will require that you make your own arrangements. Be sure that you receive all the relevant vaccinations for the area to which you will be travelling – avail of expert advice about this topic to ensure that you have the most up-to-date information.

**Thought about how to protect your financial interests while abroad?**

In the excitement of preparing for volunteering, it is not uncommon to place low priority on thinking about protecting your financial interests while overseas, including your social welfare rights. Issues to consider include continuing your pension payments, ongoing PRSI contributions, and tax rebates.

**Health and safety**

While sending organisations can provide volunteers with guidance and training on this topic, it is also your responsibility as a volunteer to abide by that advice and to use your common sense. Additionally, your general research into your placement should include finding out about the local health and security situation. In a situation where you are volunteering with other people, you also need to consider the impact of your actions and whether they will have an effect on the safety and security of those around you. Ask yourself the following questions to help you decide whether you are thinking about the relevant issues.

**Have you:**

- Made certain that your sending organisation/host community has details of your next of kin in case of an emergency, and that your next of kin has your overseas contact details?
- Participated in any health and safety training provided by your organisation?
- Familiarised yourself with the organisation’s health and safety guidelines, and agreed to uphold these?
- Agreed to take due care while overseas to ensure that your actions will not affect the safety and health of the people that you will work with?

“Personal health can’t be stressed enough. You are no good to anyone when you are sick for months when a good rest could have cured you initially. I was
amazed at how fragile my body was in Africa. I was more prone to illness and I could feel my immune system weaken even if I had sufficient sleep. Also, it is good to know what to do and who to call in the event of an accident, where you will be treated, whether you will have to be flown to another location, etc” Jane, volunteer in Zambia.

“[My placement organisation] provided excellent backup and training in the months before departure in the areas of fundraising, the medical/immunisations issues involved, language training, conflict resolution, etc. Once in Tanzania, there was a further week of training to help the volunteers adjust to life on a camp in rural Tanzania, language training, how to relate to the local population, health issues and so on. The summer finished off with a feedback weekend in the UK, where the successes and failures of the summer were analysed and noted for further improvement of the programme” Declan, volunteer in Tanzania.

**Learning during your placement:**

Now that you are on your placement, what are the main things you are learning through your experiences?

---

**Principal 6: Volunteers agree to: Channel the experiences and knowledge gained while overseas into Irish society**

**Do you:**

**Agree to participate in any debriefing available after your placement?**

Debriefing can offer you the opportunity to reflect on your experiences, and to provide any comments or suggestions you may have for the future development of a programme.

**Commit to being available on your return to correspond with potential volunteers about your overseas experiences?**

As a volunteer, you have the privileged position of being able to learn about your host community and experience what it is like to work in a developing country. These experiences can provide an invaluable source of information for people who are considering the possibility of volunteering overseas. Many organisations look for returned volunteers to talk to potential volunteers, either on a one-to-one basis or in groups. By agreeing to provide information to potential volunteers, you will have the opportunity to assist them and to provide them with personal insights into what their experiences might be like.
Agree to consider participating in events arranged by your organisation that relate to your placement?

Sending organisations often look for returning volunteers to participate in events such as information events or group talks. Again, by agreeing to participate in these, you will have the opportunity to discuss your experiences with a wider audience and to raise awareness in Ireland about issues affecting the developing world.

Agree to examine and consider the various opportunities available to remain involved in global development issues on your return home?

As one returned volunteer has stated, “commitment doesn’t end at the airport”. Volunteering overseas forms part of a continuum that encompasses the point when you first decide to go to a developing country, to your activism when you get home. There are many different ways in which you can remain engaged in working to effect change.

Some examples include:

- Joining a solidarity or campaigning group;
- Becoming a volunteer fundraiser for your sending organisation or the projects you worked with in your host country; and
- Supporting fairer trade through your purchases.

If we only go overseas to help, but do not work to challenge the root causes of global injustice, our actions will not help to prevent the recurrence of present problems.

“I believe that those who were working in a volunteering capacity should pass on the small bit that they may have learned. I feel lucky to have experienced what I did and feel I owe it to the people there to promote awareness of their everyday difficulties” Jane, volunteer in Zambia.

As a returned development worker (RDW)/volunteer, Comhlámh provides free support, advice and guidance to facilitate your return to Ireland, to deal with reverse culture shock and to assist you with settling back in. This support ranges from social events to careers advice, information on social welfare, pensions, health, etc, to engaging you in ongoing debates on development in Ireland. As an RDW/volunteer returning from a short or long-term assignment, you are entitled to 12 months’ free membership of Comhlámh from the date of your return to Ireland. Simply contact the Project Officer for RDWs to activate your membership (rdw@comhlamh.org) or register via www.comhlamh.org.
Coming home: How do you imagine you will put your unique experiences and knowledge of development issues to use when you return to Ireland?

Principal 7: Volunteers agree to: Accept and sign a Code of Conduct embodying these principles

Have you:

Provided your organisation with a signed copy of this Charter?
By doing so, you are signalling your support for the aims and values that it sets out.

Useful web sites and resources are also provided at the end of the Comhláhmh charter such as:

www.volunteeringoptions.org    www.ethicalvolunteering.org    www.dochas.ie
www.developmenteducation.ie    www.irishaid.gov.ie
Comhlámh’s Volunteer Charter

(My copy)

I’ve read the Volunteer Charter, and agree to do the following:

1) Inform myself about all relevant issues relating to my placement;
2) Familiarise myself thoroughly with my role description before departure;
3) Respect local customs and adopt the role of learner and guest;
4) Act always in a professional manner and be flexible and adaptable while in my placement;
5) Take due care with my personal safety and physical and mental health;
6) Channel the experiences and knowledge gained while overseas into Irish society; and
7) Accept and sign a Code of Conduct embodying these principles.

Name of sending organisation:

Volunteer’s signature:

Date:

(Return to my sending organisation)

I’ve read the Volunteer Charter, and agree to do the following:

1) Inform myself about all relevant issues relating to my placement;
2) Familiarise myself thoroughly with my role description before departure;
3) Respect local customs and adopt the role of learner and guest;
4) Act always in a professional manner and be flexible and adaptable while in my placement;
5) Take due care with my personal safety and physical and mental health;
6) Channel the experiences and knowledge gained while overseas into Irish society; and
7) Accept and sign a Code of Conduct embodying these principles.

Name of sending organisation:

Volunteer’s signature:

Date:
Appendix V
Interview Topic Guide

1. What is your understanding of the volunteer experience/what is a volunteer?
2. Why do volunteer’s come here? (Motivations?)
3. What are your expectations when a volunteer is coming here? Do they usually meet your expectations?
4. Do volunteer’s meet expectation in relation to:
   - Your perceptions of foreigners?
   - Relationships within the community?
   - On a practical level, in what they do?
5. What impact do volunteer’s have while working with the community in terms of:
   - Work, the usefulness of?
   - Relationships within the community?
6. What are your attitudes/opinions of the sending organisation?
   - Do you think volunteers receive adequate training?
   - How does this affect the placement?
   - Does the sending organisation communicate with you or the community?
   - What is the relationship?
   - Do you think there is a connection with funding?
7. Why do communities continue to accept volunteers?
   - Do you have a choice?
   - Have you ever said no?
   - Who decides? Who chooses the volunteers?
8. What effect is there when a volunteer leaves?
   - On a practical level?
   - On relationships within the community?
9. If you had a choice, would you prefer to have volunteer’s in your community or not? Why?

10. Describe positive and negative experiences you have had with volunteers?

11. What changes would you like to see made to the volunteer programme?

12. Is there anything else you would like to say about the volunteer programme?

**Topic Guide for Children and Secondary School Students**

1. What is a volunteer?
2. What is your experience of volunteers here?
3. Why do you think they come here?
4. What work do they do here with you?
5. Why do the community have volunteers here?
6. What do you like about this programme?
7. What do you not like about this programme?
8. Any other comments you would like to make?
Appendix VI

Codes used in data analysis

The volunteer - perceived motivations:

- The desire to serve those who are less fortunate
- ‘Service’ as characteristic of western culture
- Enhancing career opportunities
- University requirements/research
- Wanting to help
- Social/military service

The role of the volunteer in development

Effects on the host community:

- Practical work and activities
- Effects of volunteers on the children
- Setting a good example
- Skills transfer
- Qualifications
- Language barriers
- Perceptions of the wider community
- Effects on donations
- Perceived threat of religious conversion
- Effects on school enrolment
- Expectations
- When a volunteer leaves

Effect on the volunteer

- Learning experience
- Educational value for communities in home countries
- Difficulties experienced by volunteers when on placement
- Change in the attitudes of the volunteers
**Relationships:**
- Changing impressions of people towards foreigners
- Volunteers remaining in contact with projects
- Imposing western value systems
- Negative experiences
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Cultural exchange
- Learning experience
- Relationships with sending organisations
- Communication with sending organisations
- Pre-departure training
- Why accept volunteers?
- Links to funding
- Who decides? Is there a choice for the host community?
- What changes would they make?
- Other relevant comments
Appendix VII
Photographs from the projects of BREADS

Republic Day celebrations, 2009, Don Bosco School, Tumkur, Karnataka, India.

Savio Bhavan boys, Child Labour Rehabilitation Centre, Tumkur, Karnataka, India.

Savio Bhavan, Child Labour Rehabilitation Project, Don Bosco, Tumkur, Karnataka, India.

Don Bosco School, Tumkur, Karnataka, India

Local government school, Karnataka, India
Don Bosco IT Training College, KGF, Karnataka.

Tree planting – Don Bosco Students and BREADS volunteers

BREADS volunteer and Savio Bhavan children. (Photo by Sara Marks).

Children from BREADS project for street children, Davangere, Karnataka, India.

Rural village school

Don Bosco, Tumkur, Child Labour Rehabilitation Centre
BIBLIOGRAPHY


