

Engaging Returned Development Workers in Development Education



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Glossary

APSO Agency for Personal Service Overseas

BSD Building Support for Development Strategy

CADA Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies in Northern Ireland

CBO Community-Based Organisation

CGE Centre for Global Education

DFID Department for International Development

FBO Faith-Based Organisation

PCA Principal Components Analysis

RDW Returned Development Worker

VSA Volunteer Sending Agencies



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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

This is a research report on the engagement with development education in the Northern part of Ireland of volunteers who have worked in the global South. The aim was to map experiences and perspectives on engagement of the Returned Development Workers (RDWs) and the Volunteer Sending Agencies (VSAs) who facilitate people from here to work in the global South. The mapping entailed quantitative and qualitative analyses (surveys of both volunteers (n = 48) and the sending agencies (n = 20) alongside interviews with ten RDWs. The underlying rationale for the research was to assess the interest of RDWs and VSAs in a possible future initiative that would create a process that harnesses the experience and commitment of RDWs to the global justice agenda through their involvement in development education. The Centre for Global Education (CGE) and Comhlámh commissioned PMG Consulting to carry out the research in 2010.

The EU has designated 2011 as The European Year of Volunteering. This research is a contribution to the knowledge base on one issue germane to volunteering, specifically the role that RDWs may fulfil to advancing development education across the region. Following Irish Aid, for the purposes of this research.

"Development education aims to deepen understanding of global poverty and encourage people towards action for a more just and equal world. As such, it can build support for efforts by government and civil society to promote a development agenda and it can prompt action at a community and individual level."

FINDINGS

Mapping VSAs - Assuming that (conservatively) one in ten of RDWs are effectively recruited to the future initiative, we estimate that this will result in a manageable and useful new intake of ten RDWs each year. If the Centre for Global Education and Comhlámh undertake a follow-up initiative that includes within its work, 'short-term volunteers', the intake might reasonably be expected to number twenty. Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) contribute the majority of the RDWs to those available for the future initiative in the Northern part of Ireland. The area to which VSAs support for RDWs appears least developed is in post-return training. A general feature (there are exceptions) of the post-return engagement support VSAs offer is its episodic character, which requires the RDW 'to make the running'. Much of the support VSAs offer emphasises the recruitment of RDWs into their own development education activities. For the most part, VSAs have difficulty allocating the resources required to give strategic effect to their intentions with regard to their RDWs' engagement.

Mapping RDWs - A majority of RDWs would welcome additional engagement support from their VSAs and a larger majority want to see follow-up project taken forward by CGE and Comhlámh. Many RDWs require professional support to enhance their confidence, competence and knowledge and hence enable them to contribute further to development education. There is at present a small nucleus of committed and active RDWs that could serve as a skilled initial cohort for the future initiative. An important vulnerability of the future initiative would be over-reliance on these. Only a minority of Northern RDWs are availing of Comhlámh's offering, those that have done so, tend to value it highly. 'Personal mission' continues to be an important motivation for RDWs' engagement.

Understanding RDWs - A follow-up initiative that 'works' for the RDWs will be one which: has an openness and looseness of the channels through which RDWs engage as their life circumstances permit; ensures that those that live outside the principal urban centres have a meaningful way to sustain their participation; provides supports for 'new' RDWs to 'keep them in the loop'; creates opportunities for RDWs to 'tell their story' of development in ways that are consistent with the development education sector's requirements; facilitates 'new' RDWs to refresh this collective narrative; draws in additional audiences for development education among Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and FBOs; and adopts a networking perspective for its work, drawing into development education, RDWs own connections to other parts of civil society.



RECOMMENDATIONS

In the report, we make the following “recommendations for further in-depth work with RDWs on global education activities” (Terms of Reference, page numbers refer to where each is discussed):

- A** Include a strand of work seeking to stimulate interest in the future initiative among VSAs. 21
- B** Include a strand of work on how the future initiative may contribute to the planning of VSAs’ development education work. 27
- C** Ensure the ethos of the future initiative is welcoming of both secular and faith-based perspectives on global justice. 29
- D** Identifies channels through which ‘short-term volunteers’ as well as ‘long-term development workers’ may engage with in any follow-up initiative. 29
- E** Ensure that what the any follow-up initiative ‘adds value to VSAs already for RDWs by way of post-return training by strengthening its programmatic’ character. 30
- F** Identify a process that enables RDWs, CGE and Comhlámh to come to a shared view on the extent (if any) to which the future initiative should offer additional development education events, as opposed to, for example, facilitating participation in work already underway. 31
- G** Ensure there is a reasonable level of understanding among RDWs of the complexities that arise in the engagement process. 34
- H** Include a strand of work on the contribution that could be made to post-return training by VSAs on RDWs’ engagement. 40
- I** Networking, working with community-based organisations and general awareness raising should all feature in the follow-up initiative. 44
- J** Articulating a persuasive communication that resonates with the ‘personal mission’ dimension, a message that recalls the RDWs’ original commitment to global justice. 50
- K** Considering a credible form of regional coverage, perhaps through a ‘county’ structure. 50
- L** Ensure there is attention given to build sufficient confidence, competence and knowledge for engagement among each year’s intake of ‘new’ RDWs. 52
- M** Prioritise during its first year the recruitment of ‘new’ RDWs to reduce vulnerability of any follow-up initiative to over-reliance on currently highly active RDWs. 53
- N** Consider how the future initiative may contribute to the marketing of Comhlámh’s post-return supports to RDWs, in particular clarifying the nature of the benefits these provide for RDWs and facilitating greater numbers of Northern RDWs to avail of these. 54
- O** Ensure the ethos of the future initiative emphasises the flexibility of the ways in which RDWs may participate in its activities. 70
- P** Consider the ways in which the follow-up initiative’s existing RDWs may offer more continuing ‘buddy’ support for ‘new’ returnees. 71
- Q** Consider the practical ways in which the new initiative could augment Comhlámh’s counselling support to Northern RDWs. 71
- R** Adopt a collective story-telling approach to elicit from RDWs what their substantive contribution to development education is and that CGE and Comhlámh facilitate the integration of this narrative with, where appropriate, their existing development education activities. 72
- S** Anticipate an appropriate method, for example, dialogue mapping that ensures ‘new’ RDWs narratives may refresh the collective narrative of Northern RDWs. 73
- T** Consider the ways in which the follow-up initiative may engage new audiences for development education in community- and faith-based organisations through offering one-off inputs to these as informal introductions to global justice issues. 74
- U** Offer to interested RDWs training in systematic approaches to campaigning on global justice. 74
- V** Consider the ways in which the future initiative could facilitate informal networking between RDWs that will extend the influence of the initiative into other domains in which the RDWs are active. 75
- W** Prioritise the inputs that the future initiative is to make to VSAs on agencies with fewer resources. 75
- X** Encourage the formation of relationships characterised by mutual trust between the future initiative and VSAs. 75
- Y** CGE and Comhlámh prepare an outline of a future initiative and, following the endorsement of RDWs, secure funding for it. 76

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 The central focus of the research is development education. The research is intended to inform a process that enhances the participation of RDWs and VSAs in development education. This process would integrate its work with existing initiatives, by CGE, Comhlámh and others, that address global justice through development education. In this section, following a short comment on the policy context, we identify the particular gap the research seeks to fill through a selective review of the literature. We then note the aims and objectives of the research and describe the methods used to achieve these. Finally, there is an overview of the general characteristics of the RDWs and VSAs. Throughout the report we use 'development education' to refer to a process, through which those engaging in it, acquire a greater understanding of global justice issues, ie, those factors that govern the distribution of resources between the global North and South.

1.2 POLICY CONTEXT

1.2.1 Irish Aid's Development Education Strategy 2007-2011 Promoting Public Engagement for Development sets out the following aims and objectives;

[Aim is] To ensure that development education reaches a wide audience in Ireland by increasing the provision of high-quality programmes to teachers and others involved in development education and by working with the education sector, NGOs and civil society partners. [Objectives are to] Strengthen coherence between development education and national education, citizenship and development policies in Ireland and support the growth of best practice in development education at European and international levels. Contribute to high-quality development education in Ireland through strengthened support for development education practitioners and the organisations in which they work. Support the further integration of development education in formal and non-formal education programmes in Ireland. Ensure that our development education initiatives raise public awareness and understanding of the underlying causes of global poverty and inequality and Ireland's role in tackling these issues.

1.2.2 The broad goal of the future initiative aligns well with, and is relevant to, all four of the objectives. While the putative role of RDWs per se is underdeveloped in the policy, there is a clear recognition of the contribution that they make, in terms of the general support for volunteers, and, more practically, in the funding Irish Aid provides for Comhlámh. Both Irish Aid and UK Aid share the aim of creating greater public understanding of global justice issues among citizens in each state. We turn to UK Aid next.

1.2.3 UK Aid (DFID) is undertaking an extensive review of its approach to development awareness raising among UK citizens following the 2010 UK election. Under the previous (Labour) administration, development education was arguably the primary practical nexus between DFID and the public. The overarching policy framework was the Building Support for Development Strategy (BSD). A recent and positive review proposed that:

"DFID should give higher priority within the BSD Strategy to civil society audiences and institutions resourcing this work financially and with appropriate staff engagement." (p 5)

1.2.4 The 2006 White Paper Making Governance Work for the Poor committed to double development education investment, enhance primary education work, adopt measures to promote active citizenship, and extend links between civil society here and in the global South. Following the 2006 White Paper, the Strategy was extended to include a Diaspora Volunteering Initiative and this review found that it:

"can be judged a success as many returned volunteers become active agents in building support for development with their own communities and beyond." (ibid p 27)

1.2.5 Prior to the 2010 election, development education figured prominently in UK Aid's work in both formal and informal sectors. However, it is unclear whether this will continue. The current DFID Business Plan makes no mention of development education. However, the explicit funding for the Diaspora Volunteering Initiative in the Building Support for Development Strategy

signals the significance of the work of RDWs for development education. We also note that the underlying goal of the future initiative aligns clearly with the emerging Big Society agenda.

1.3 RESEARCH CONTEXT

1.3.1 While there are some signs that research in Ireland on RDWs' engagement with global justice is emerging, the literature is sparse, tends to be qualitative and, importantly, has little to say on the particular circumstances of the Northern part of the island. In a recent review of volunteering in Ireland, an analysis commissioned by the EU limits its commentary to noting that "There are no specific international policies for volunteering in Ireland, however in 2006 under the Department of Foreign Affairs, over 2000 Irish volunteers went abroad with organisations involved in international volunteering such as VSO, Suas, Niall Mellon Trust and Irish Aid." (p 11) The seminal Hidden Landscape review of the third sector in the Republic noted the funding of international NGOs but does not comment on engagement by their RDWs. One recent contribution from Comhlámh does include a quantitative perspective and identifies time pressure and information (on engagement opportunities) to be key barriers. A commentary from Dóchas proposes that development volunteering in Ireland has progressed through a series of stages but has little to say on the role of RDWs. MacRory argues that VSAs, her specific focus is Voluntary Service Overseas (Ireland), should attend to promoting a cause in which altruists may believe, acknowledge their contribution, offer professionally appropriate engagement options, address possible staff / RDW conflicts, manage expectations, and build constructive relations with the RDWs.

1.3.2 The issue of RDWs' engagement has received rather more systematic attention elsewhere. Reporting on Canada, researchers report that citizens:

"who have served abroad in the developing world are among the most active volunteers in Canada. Nearly two thirds of returned overseas volunteers regularly volunteer... appear to be more attracted to global issues, community development, poverty reduction, and human rights." (p 30)

Their key recommendations on the importance of the opportunities to share skills, clarity on

expectations and making use of cross-cultural expertise are all relevant to the future initiative. This study informed the motivation items we developed for the RDW questionnaire.

1.3.3 The research on which we report here, adds to the knowledge base through:

- linking the mapping of RDWs and VSAs, thus providing a more complete account of the engagement issue;
- filling the particular lacuna with regard to data on Northern RDWs; and
- does so through applying an 'action research' perspective, in which the goal is to guide CGE and Comhlámh's thinking on the follow-up initiative.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 The aim and objectives for the research were set out in the terms of reference:

"Aim of Consultancy - To undertake a mapping and consultation exercise designed to engage RDWs in global education.

Objectives of Consultancy - To undertake research with four main objectives: first, to compile a literature review on returned development workers in the island of Ireland; second, to compile a database of Volunteer Sending Agencies in Northern Ireland; third, to compile a database of RDWs in Northern Ireland; fourth, to consult with this constituency through qualitative research methods. To compile a research report that includes the main research findings and contains recommendations for further in-depth work with RDWs on global education activities.

To facilitate discussion on the research outcomes and recommendations, and agree next steps in conjunction with project stakeholders."

1.4.2 The intended outcomes of the study were:

"The research study will enable an important constituency to get involved in global education as practitioners and agents of learning.

The research will result in the compilation of comprehensive databases of VSAs and RDWs in Northern Ireland.

The research consultant will conduct 10 interviews and carry out 3 Focus Groups with 24 RDWs that will underpin the research findings.

The research will provide informed

recommendations that will enable CGE and Comhlámh to formulate an action plan comprising next steps for the delivery of services to RDWs and also sustaining the involvement of RDWs in global education activities and social justice actions. The research will result in the publication of a report carrying the outcomes of the qualitative and quantitative methods used in the study."

1.4.3 At the project initiation meeting, CGE and Comhlámh clarified that that the study should address the following core issues:

- a descriptive issue - the support their VSA provided post- placement;
- an evaluative issue - are RDWs satisfied with the support they receive post-placement, in terms of whether the opportunities to meet like-minded people, the support services they received from Comhlámh, especially important for those who pursued humanitarian relief work abroad, and more broadly, whether the post- placement process led them to development education work; and
- a planning issue - is there sufficient interest among RDWs in the region to sustain a global education project into the future.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 We reviewed a wide range of literature to identify:

- policy positions adopted by different agencies germane to the engagement of RDWs' engagement with development education;
- practices of agencies and RDWs relevant to this engagement; and
- key issues for exploration during the consultation with Centre for Global Education, Comhlámh and RDWs.

While the literature review provided clear guidance on possible issues to be explored with regard to the motivation of RDWs, with the exception of Comhlámh, it proved unsuccessful in identifying agencies' perspectives on RDWs' engagement with global justice.

1.5.2 For the VSA mapping survey, we:

- prepared a list of VSAs that CGE and Comhlámh knew to operate in, or recruit from, the region, principally members of the Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies in Northern Ireland (CADA);
- created a web-based survey to facilitate the identified person in each VSA to describe

their role in supporting RDWs following the completion of their assignments;

- e-mailed the identified person with the URL link to the VSA web-based survey, monitored the completion of the survey and as appropriate sent reminder emails, at least three;
- analysed the data with regard to the issues identified in the literature review and by the Advisory Group.

1.5.3 For the RDW mapping survey, we

- prepared a list of known RDWs from Comhlámh's contact data on members living in the region and supplemented this from other contact data;
- created a (second) web-based survey to facilitate RDWs to comment on their interests in engagement in development education, post-placement support inputs, networking opportunities, skills and knowledge sharing, etc, and their interest and availability to participate in the interviews and focus groups, the content of the questionnaire was agreed in advance with the Advisory Group;
- e-mailed the RDW a URL link to the second web-based survey, invited the RDW to send a URL link to other RDWs in this region ('snowballing'); and requested relevant e-newsletters, including those of the CGE, Comhlámh and Activelink to include this URL link in their e-mailings, inviting further RDWs to participate in the web-based survey, monitored the completion of the survey and as appropriate sent reminder emails (three); and
- analysed the data with regard to the issues identified in the literature review and by the Advisory Group.

1.5.4 For the qualitative work, we asked RDWs who completed the survey to provide contact details. In the event only eleven, who were resident in the Northern part of the island, did so. We conducted in-depth interviews with ten of these. While the original intention was to carry out face-to-face interviews, inclement weather in the 2010 winter made this impractical. Telephone interviews were carried out, with an average duration of 45 minutes. The small number of those who were willing to be contacted made the focus group discussions infeasible. During the interviews we explored the RDW's perspectives on the:

- general needs of RDWs;
- interest and application of skills, knowledge and understanding to development education or campaigning;
- needs with regard to post-placement counselling

- and adaptation to living in the region;
- professional development and support needs;
- interest in networking; and
- interest in maintaining input to their VSAs.

1.5.5 The mapping exercise is based on 20 VSAs and 48 RDWs who participated in the surveys and ten in-depth interviews with RDWs. Due to the sampling approach, it is not appropriate to report response rates. However, with regard to VSAs, we note that all CADA members had an opportunity to contribute and it seems likely that if the agency had a particular interest in RDWs' engagement, they would have taken advantage of the survey process. In relation to the RDWs, the original contact data made available by Comhlámh, the subsequent 'snowballing' and alerts in e-newsletters (that RDWs may likely scan), should all have combined to create a reasonable opportunity for RDWs to become aware of the mapping exercise, and if interested, take part in it. We considered offering a modest incentive to those completing the questionnaire but, following the advice of the Advisory Group, we decided this was inappropriate in relation to the development education sector's values.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF RDW & VSA SOURCES

1.6.1 The following agencies participated in the VSA survey:

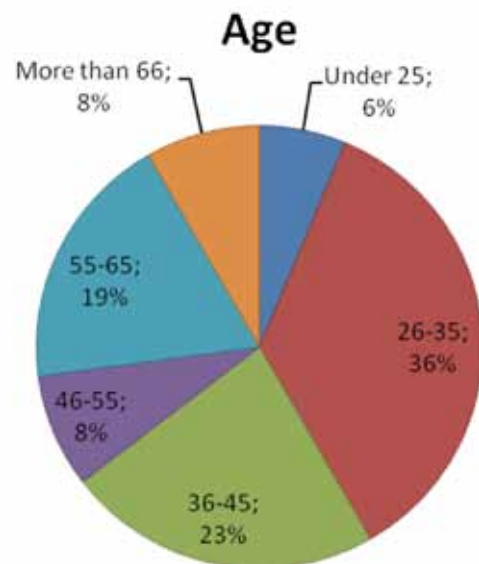
- 2 Way Development
- Amnesty International UK
- British Red Cross
- Camara
- Centre for Global Education
- Christian Aid Ireland
- Concern
- GOAL Ireland
- Habitat for Humanity NI
- Interserve Ireland
- Irish Missionary Union
- Medical Missionaries of Mary
- Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Save the Children
- SEEDS & the Changaro Trust
- Tools For Solidarity
- Viatores Christi
- Voluntary Service Overseas
- Volunteer Missionary Movement
- War on Want NI

1.6.2 The VSA sources perform roles for their agencies in relation to RDWs that suggests they are well informed about the perspectives of their agencies. Our VSA sources point to a variety of roles in relation to VSAs including:

- making presentations to RDWs on how they could contribute in "practical solidarity" to the work of the agency, sometimes contributing to pre-departure training of other Development Workers;
- facilitating RDWs to "feedback for future planning" on their experience in the global South;
- "debriefing" RDWs including goal-setting on their return;
- combined with the debriefing, assessing RDWs' needs with regard to health and counselling;
- "inviting" RDWs to participate in development education courses the agency offers through adult education courses to which the agency contributes; and
- organising an "alumni service" facilitating contact between RDWs and the acquisition of knowledge on development issues.

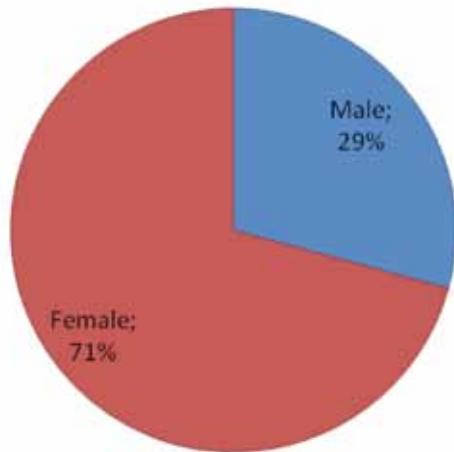
1.6.3 Our sample suggests that these RDWs on average, have been 'home' for just under five years, are:

Rather more likely to be aged between 26 and 45 years old,



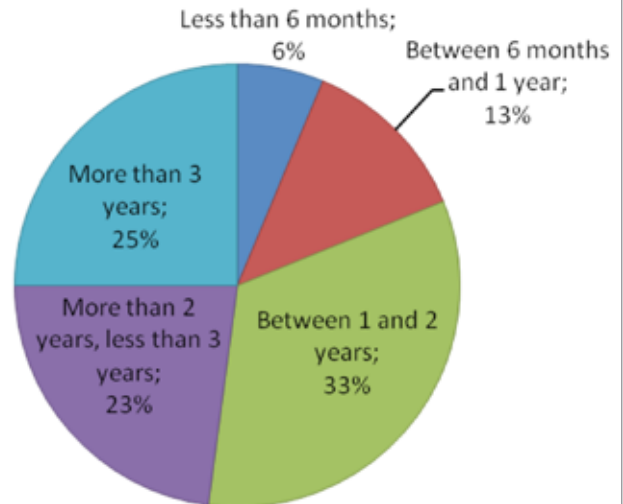
Much more likely to be women rather than men

Gender



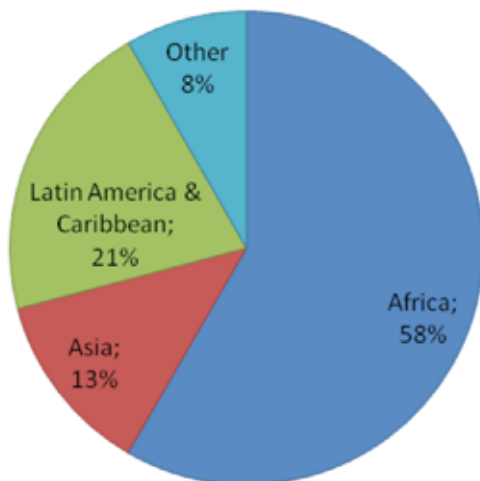
Spent between one and three years overseas,

Duration of work in the global south



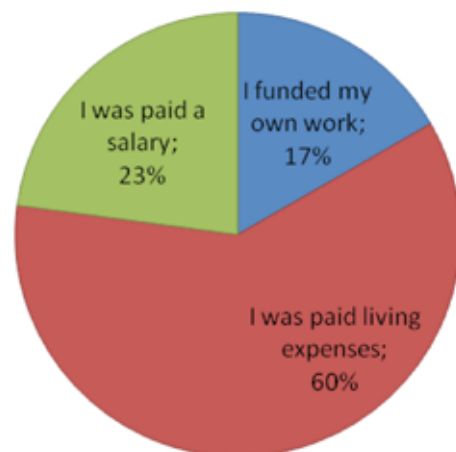
Tended more often to have worked in Africa rather than elsewhere,

Where RDWs worked in the global south



Were paid living expenses while overseas.

Remuneration Arrangement



1.7 CONCLUSION

1.7.1 While there are limitations to the completeness of the coverage of both VSA and RDW surveys, in our opinion both sources are sufficient for the sponsors to form a reasonably full understanding of the issues relevant to the RDWs' engagement in global education and how VSAs support this. Development education articulates a profound imperative to advance awareness of the issue of justice with regard to relations between the global North and South . RDWs have a particular contribution to make to this as their voice carries a specific authenticity, however partial, they may reasonably claim to have 'walked the walk as well as talked the talk'. They represent an important asset for the development education sector as they possess an experiential knowledge of development work of value to the sector. Through the mapping of VSAs and RDWs, the CGE and Comhlámh have achieved an important first step in the process of engaging these individuals as potential agents of change in the sector and across the region.

2 MAPPING VOLUNTEER SENDING AGENCIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 In this section, we describe the characteristics of VSAs active in sending voluntary development workers from the region to work in the global South. Firstly, we note the distribution of both long- and short-term volunteering that the agencies facilitate. We then comment on how important the engagement of RDWs is for the VSAs. Following this we comment on the volume and content of the support, the agencies provide to facilitate engagement and adaptation. Other material on the perspectives of the agencies on RDWs' engagement follows. The section concludes with a commentary on the implications of the agency mapping exercise for the future initiative.

2.2 WHO SENDS 'LONG-TERM' DEVELOPMENT WORKERS?

2.2.1 The sample suggests that in total agencies facilitated 82 people to work in the global South on long-term placements during the last twelve months. There are two striking features to the data. Firstly, the total number, while well under 100, points to a substantial constituency of development workers, with new cohorts contributing to a large potential user-base for the future initiative. Secondly, faith-based organisations figure prominently, well over half (59%) are associated, to a greater or lesser extent, with a missionary perspective on development work, and two-thirds of these are accounted for by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The implication for the future initiative is that the potential user-base, it would appear, is in large part composed of development workers who are, to some extent at least, in part motivated by a religious sense of missionary duty. The table shows the detail.

Presbyterian Church in Ireland	31
Voluntary Service Overseas	11
GOAL Ireland	8
Medical Missionaries of Mary	6
Volunteer Missionary Movement	6
Concern	6
Viatore Christi	5
2 Way Development	5
SEEDS & Changaro Trust	4
Total in last 12 months	82

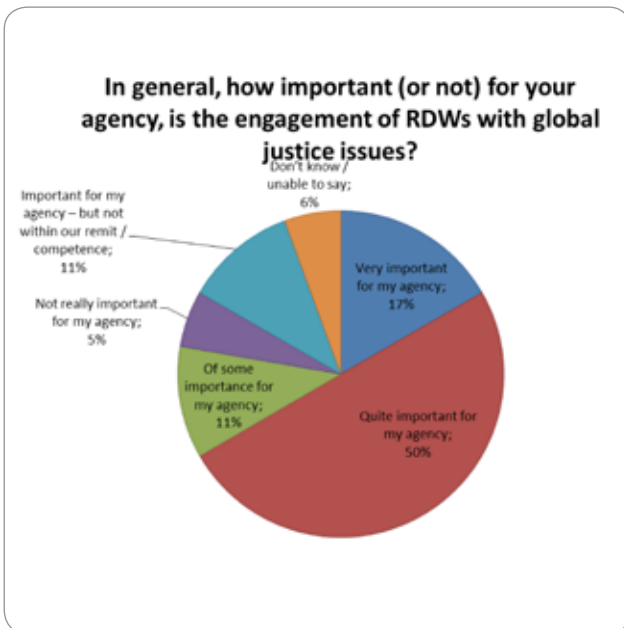
2.3 WHO SENDS 'SHORT-TERM' DEVELOPMENT WORKERS?

2.3.1 The Advisory Group advised that the mapping exercise should distinguish between 'short-term' and 'long-term' volunteering. Operationally, 'long-termers' were deemed to be those spending more than six months in the global South. While there is an inevitably arbitrary character to the distinction, it is one commonly applied in the literature and does seem to be a 'real' distinction for sending agencies, which tend to be either senders of 'short-termers' or 'long-termers'. Two of the few agencies in the table below were also numbered under 'long-term' above, but both predominantly use either one or the other placement duration model. The survey suggests that while short-term volunteering has a clear attraction (totalling 546 in the last year), this is in very large part accounted for by one sending agency (Habitat for Humanity). The table shows the data.

Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland	500
SEEDS & the Changaro Trust	31
Camara	12
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	3
Total Short-Term	546

2.4 IS RDWS' ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT FOR VSAS?

2.4.1 In general, the agencies do attach considerable importance to the engagement of RDWs with global justice issues. Two thirds of the agencies (67%) considered this to be 'very', 'quite' or 'somewhat' important. The pie chart shows the responses.



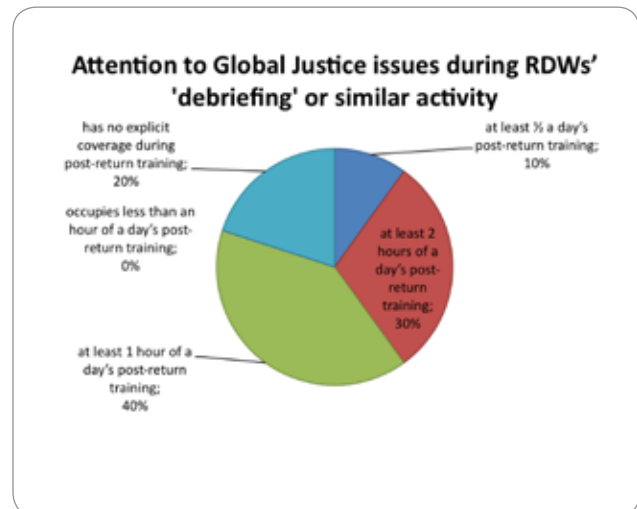
2.4.2 The interesting point is that few agencies (three) considered it 'very important', with half deeming it 'quite important'. The three in question are made up of two faith-based organisations that are 'sending agencies' (of long-term volunteers) and one other development education organisation. While there is a marked level of importance attached to the work that the future initiative is to advance, the level of its importance among many VSAs is not that which will serve as an imperative actively to support the future initiative. We recommend the action plan



A. Include a strand of work seeking to stimulate interest in the future initiative among VSAs.

2.5 HOW DO VSAS SUPPORT RDWS' ENGAGEMENT?

2.5.1 We asked agencies to identify the volume of training support they offered to development workers on their engagement with global justice before departure and after their return. The charts show the results.



2.5.2 There are two points to note: first, there is a significant volume of training time devoted to the issue before departure and after return; second, attention, surprisingly, given after return tends to be lower than that devoted to it before departure. The next table shows the frequency with which the agencies offer different types of support to RDWs for their continuing engagement with global justice issues.

Type of Support Agencies Provide for RDWs		Count	%
Support on how to organise events on global justice issues?	No Provision	10	71%
	Provision	4	29%
Advice or training on giving presentations / 'talks' on global justice issues?	No Provision	9	60%
	Provision	6	40%
Advice or training on working with the media on raising awareness on global justice issues?	No Provision	10	67%
	Provision	5	33%
Advice or training on networking activities aiming to raise awareness on global justice issues?	No Provision	10	67%
	Provision	5	33%
Advice or training on ways to raise awareness on global justice issues through community-based organisations?	No Provision	8	57%
	Provision	6	43%
Advice or training on setting up groups aiming to raise awareness on global justice issues?	No Provision	11	73%
	Provision	4	27%
Advice or training on raising awareness on global justice issues more generally?	No Provision	7	58%
	Provision	5	42%
Use of RDWs as local 'ambassadors' for your agency on global justice issues?	No Provision	6	43%
	Provision	8	57%
During training for your agency's own staff on global justice issues?	No Provision	9	69%
	Provision	4	31%
Involving RDWs during pre-departure training on global justice issues for new development workers your agency is sending to the global South?	No Provision	5	42%
	Provision	7	58%
Some other activity your agency considers appropriate to facilitate the engagement of its RDWs with global justice issues not covered in items on this page?	No Provision	8	62%
	Provision	5	38%
Employment support for its RDWs?	No Provision	6	46%
	Provision	7	54%
Wellbeing support (for example on readjustment issues) for its RDWs?	No Provision	5	38%
	Provision	8	62%
General resettlement support for its RDWs?	No Provision	5	42%
	Provision	7	58%
Other resettlement support for its RDWs, not covered in items on this page?	No Provision	8	73%
	Provision	3	27%

2.5.3 The striking feature of the data is that all forms of support are on offer by at least some agencies. A majority of the agencies offer input for their RDWs as ‘ambassadors’ (57%) during pre-departure training for other development workers (58%). A minority of between a quarter and a half offer all of the other supports. With regard to the support needs of RDWs on their return from the global South, a majority offer employment support (54%), wellbeing support (62%), and more general resettlement support (58%).

2.6 WHAT IS THE CONTENT OF THE ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT?

2.6.1 We asked agencies to identify the content of the support they provide to facilitate RDWs’ engagement with global justice issues. We summarise the content below.

- Organising events - broadly, VSAs offer inputs as and when their RDWs request inputs, sometimes from their own sponsored engagement groups, as in the case of one FBO or from one-off requests from individuals RDWs or, more remotely, through relying on supplying information in newsletters.
- Making presentations - we identified the same FBO which provides dedicated professional training on making presentations, another offering inputs from their staff, and encouraging RDWs to avail of Comhlámh events.
- Media work - here again the same FBO stands out from the others in terms of the support, providing a two-day training course in working with the media, with others relying on RDWs’ requests or their own press releases.
- Networking support - agencies tended to refer to sectoral, eg Dóchas, and more general representative bodies, eg CORI, and in a couple of cases, development education training including that offered by Comhlámh.
- Working with CBOs - while agencies acknowledge this to be an arena through which awareness raising may take place through their RDWs’ work, it receives little practical attention.
- Forming awareness groups - as previous.
- RDWs as ‘ambassadors’ - while a few agencies noted the relevance of this area for their work with RDWs, there appears to be little practical support offered, apart, from, for example, facilitating RDWs’ presence as agency representatives at conferences.
- Training agency staff - no practical forms identified.
- Involving RDWs in pre-departure training - one FBO identified their use of RDWs as ‘informal mentors’, no other referred to direct use of

RDWs, although one noted they made use of other agencies during the training, including Comhlámh, which may imply the use of RDWs during pre-departure preparation.

2.6.2 In total, the agencies report that 154 RDWs took part in the activities they organised towards the goal of RDWs’ engagement with global justice issues during the last year and 79 RDWs participated in activities the agencies organised for a wider audience towards the same goal.

2.7 WHAT IS THE CONTENT OF THE ADAPTATION SUPPORT?

2.7.1 The content of the support that agencies provide to meet RDWs’ own needs is summarised below.

- Employment support – overall support appears modest, limited to CV preparation and some career advice, guidance on further work in the global South and, for one agency, ‘through Comhlámh when it was available’.
- Well-being and readjustment support - meetings to cover debriefing and medical issues through one-to-one meetings, ‘transition workshops’, follow-up phone calls and meetings, counselling as well as facilitating access to Comhlámh ‘Coming Home Weekends’, and, in one case (an FBO), financial support.
- Other support - through encouraging RDWs to remain engaged with the agency, facilitating the latter to ‘show appreciation’ of RDWs’ work, through providing housing and further study support (both FBOs).

2.8 WHAT ARE VSA’S PERSPECTIVES ON ENGAGEMENT?

2.8.1 We asked agencies to identify their objectives for the activities they carried out in the last year that involved RDWs in their work. Our interest here is in gauging what they in concrete terms want of their RDWs with a view to ensuring, where appropriate, that the future initiative contributes to delivering on agencies’ agendas, thus creating the basis for cooperation with them in advancing the future initiative. The way agencies responded to the question is interesting for it is clear many do indeed wish RDWs to contribute to (broadly) their development education work. We may characterise the objectives as aligning with one or other of two categories:

- Typically, awareness raising on global justice issues among the public or among RDWs; or
- Less commonly, recruitment of potential

development workers for deployment in the global South or volunteers for work on the issue here through the agency.

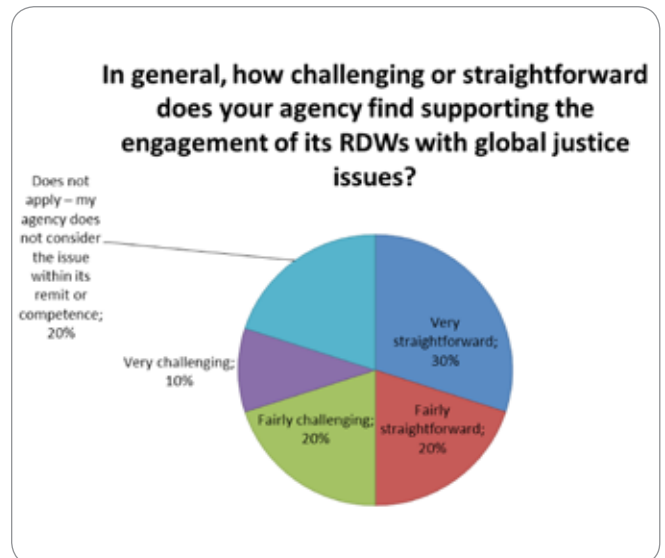
2.8.2 We asked the agencies to summarise the contents of their strategic plans insofar as these referred to RDWs' engagement. Unsurprisingly these vary according to the level of detail offered. FBOs tended to offer more concrete reference to work with RDWs, for example, one referred to a particular programme ('Transitions') and another to their input into the design of training for prospective development workers. One large international development organisation noted the role of its Human Resources Department in supporting their RDWs. Another agency referred to a planned intention to secure funding for its work with RDWs. With regard to resources dedicated to RDWs' engagement, only one agency (an FBO) has a budget, while others referred to the resources dedicated being more a matter of the organisational infrastructure, or more commonly, noted the absence of resources available for the work. Typically, agencies want RDWs to engage with global justice issues through the menu of activities the agencies currently offer. We observe that if the follow-up initiative is to make a meaningful contribution to the sector, it seems likely that it will need to go beyond facilitating recruitment to the existing offerings.

2.8.3 What is clear from the responses is that while there is a general intent among agencies, the extent to which this has been formulated in objectives that have a practical form, remains underdeveloped. Indeed this may account for why none of the agencies' activities failed to live up to or exceed their expectations - not that 'the bar was set too low', rather that there was no bar at all. This gives rise to an opportunity for the follow-up to the research to facilitate agencies to give a more operational expression to their aspirations with regard to RDWs contribution to the agencies' development education goals. We recommend that the work plan:

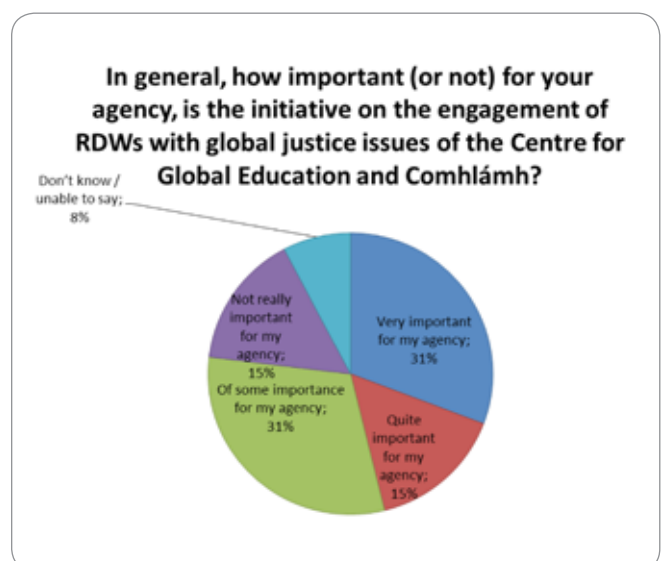


B. Include a strand of work on how the future initiative may contribute to the planning of VSAs' development education work.

2.8.4 For the majority of agencies, working with RDWs tends to be 'straightforward' (5) rather than 'challenging' (3). The chart shows the breakdown.



2.8.5 The issues that agencies identify which arise in their work with RDWs tend to be either, more commonly, capacity deficits (information about RDWs, deployable labour) or characteristics of RDWs (pressure on them associated with career or age). The graphic shows the importance the agencies attach to the prospective future initiative. Just under half (46%) consider it 'very' or quite important but the same percentage consider it to be only 'of some importance' or 'not really important'. In one sense, the question is analogous to 'whether the glass is half full or half empty'. While there is a fair degree of importance attached to how the research report's recommendations will be implemented by many VSAs, there are many others for whom it is more marginal.



2.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP INITIATIVE

2.9.1 The implications of the material presented in this section are:

- 1) The volume of long-termers the agencies facilitate suggests that, with effective promotion, there should be a reasonable number of 'new' RDWs available for the initiative agreed by CGE and Comhlámh for implementing the report's recommendations. Recognising the limitation of data for one year's sending, we should be cautious in interpreting the simple numbers. Nevertheless, assuming that a conservative estimate of 10 per cent is operative, around ten new RDWs might be expected to be available (annually) for contributing to the CGE and Comhlámh's initiative after their return.
- 2) VSAs that are FBOs contribute most of the long-termers. If the follow-up initiative is to engage with these VSAs and 'their' RDWs, it will be important that its ethos is one that welcomes and respects the faith perspective that, to some but a variable extent, informs their orientation to global justice issues. This implies a careful balancing of secular and faith-based orientations. We recommend that the action plan:

C. Ensure the ethos of the future initiative is welcoming of both secular and faith-based perspectives on global justice.
- 3) The issue of the attention that the follow-up initiative wishes to give to the distinction between short- and long-term volunteering arises. In our opinion, the two are distinct categories and the difference between the two is more than a matter of duration of work overseas. Nevertheless, there are two important practical reasons for not adopting a fixed rule include and including short-termers within any follow-up initiative. Firstly, the volunteers are engaged by a form of the global justice imperative and, on the face of it, would be potential participants in the audiences for future CGE/Comhlámh activities and it would be sensible to maximise the likelihood of their participation. Secondly, their participation in any future activities could serve to stimulate their interest in a more long-term placement. It would be something of a wasted opportunity if a follow-up initiative did not enable them, before departure to engage on a long-term placement, to acquire perhaps a more rounded understanding of global justice issues than that which their short-term experience may have allowed. We recommend the action plan:

D.

Identifies channels through which 'short-term volunteers' as well as 'long-term development workers' may engage with in any follow-up initiative.

- 4) With regard to the importance VSAs attach to RDWs' engagement, the summary may be 'important but not urgent'. It seems plausible that most of the explanation of this is that, while they do recognise its 'theoretical' importance, but not having the capacity to do much (more than they do currently) about it, it does not become a practical priority. The strand of activity on working with VSAs that we recommend that the CGE and Comhlámh develop will aim to make this more of a priority for VSAs, and this is not straightforward. However, it is feasible for the CGE and Comhlámh to help fill some of the deficit in VSAs' capacity in this respect, for example, through offering to complement the VSAs' existing pre-departure and post-return training in engagement. The data suggests that attention to post-return training would be more appropriate. For this to be a credible offering, the VSAs will likely need to be assured of the quality of the input.
- 5) The VSAs current support for RDWs' engagement is substantial in terms of the numbers of agencies offering different types of support. The role of the future initiative here is likely to be one of, where currently VSAs make provision, complementing the existing input, and where absent, offering an appropriate input to the VSAs. Apart from the inherent value of the input, this will serve as a useful way for the follow-up initiative to recruit new RDWs to its work. It appears from the nature of the actual content of the supports VSAs provide, that there is considerable scope for follow-up work to 'add value' as with a few significant exceptions (mostly FBOs) it is in fact, mostly demand-led (leaving the RDWs to articulate the demand, 'make the running') and has a markedly occasional and episodic character rather than being systematic and programmatic. We recommend the action plan:

E. Ensure that what the any follow-up initiative 'adds value to VSAs already for RDWs by way of post-return training by strengthening its programmatic' character.
- 6) The perspectives of the VSAs on RDWs' engagement are broadly propitious for any follow-up work. In general, the agencies do want

their RDWs to engage, but largely through their own development education efforts. However, the planning of, and allocation of resources to, the engagement has a very limited character. There may be scope for the follow-up initiative to support agencies to move from intention to action through contributing to the formulation of more concrete plans. This would provide an opportunity for this work to help form VSAs' development education agenda, but the opportunity is likely to be a modest one, perhaps limited to selected FBOs, other 'drivers' likely operative for most VSAs. Strategically it may be in the longer-term interest of the follow-up initiative to pursue its development education work independently of that of the agencies offer, making an additional and unique contribution to the Northern sector. We recommend the action plan:



F. Identify a process that enables RDWs, CGE and Comhlámh to come to a shared view on the extent (if any) to which the future initiative should offer additional development education events, as opposed to, for example, facilitating participation in work already underway.

3 MAPPING RETURNED DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this section, we report the results of the mapping of RDWs' engagement with global justice issues. First we comment on the nature and volume of engagement, including some obvious factors that are likely to influence their decision-making and note participation in other organisations in voluntary roles. We then explore their experience of their VSAs' support for engagement including their evaluation of this and of potential supports they did not receive. We also comment on the adaptation supports, both received and not. We then turn to the motivations that underlie RDWs' decision-making and present a factor analysis of these. Following a note of the level of interest in a follow-up initiative among RDWs we identify implications for this arising from the mapping exercise.

3.1 HOW ENGAGED ARE RDWS?

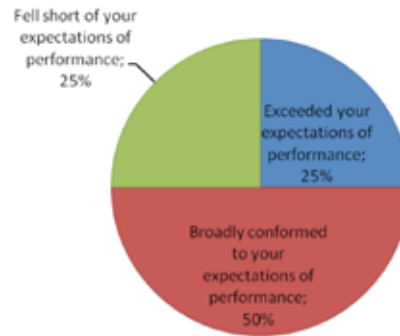
3.1.1 Those (8) that were active in the last three years, note the following diverse range of activities (excludes paid-work activities):

- "Taken part in anti-war demonstrations."
- "I try to attend everything that I can."
- "Attend rallies which I did. Workshops etc which I didn't as they always tend to happen in Belfast, and I don't live there."
- "Acting as Shared Interest and Fair-trade ambassador - didn't take part, as it took too long to get the details organised."
- "Comhlámh meetings."
- "I have taken part in Amnesty campaigns - gathering signatures for petitions; staffing a stall; demonstrations against rendition"

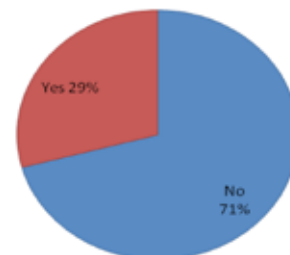
3.1.2 This chart (above right) shows the RDWs' perception of the performance of the activities in relation to their expectations. Mostly they consider them to have conformed with or exceeded their expectations, although the small number (8) suggests we should not read too much into this.

3.1.3 An obvious reason why the level of engagement is limited is simply that rather few, less than one-third (29%) have been actually asked to engage in any practical activities concerned with global justice issues.

In general, would you say these activities...?



Apart from general newsletters (printed and email), have you ever been actually asked to engage in any practical activities concerned with global justice issues?



Another obvious part of the explanation for the level of activity by the RDWs is that one half (45%) of the sample believe that it is a challenging task.

How challenging or straightforward do you think engaging with global justice issues would be for you?



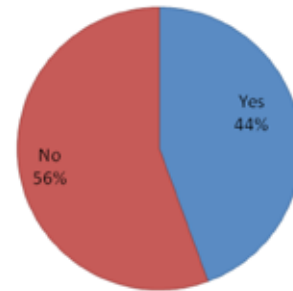
This suggests that there is scope for the future initiative to ensure the RDWs have a reasonable grasp of how it is indeed a challenging process. We recommend the follow-up initiative:



G. Ensure there is a reasonable level of understanding among RDWs of the complexities that arise in the engagement process.

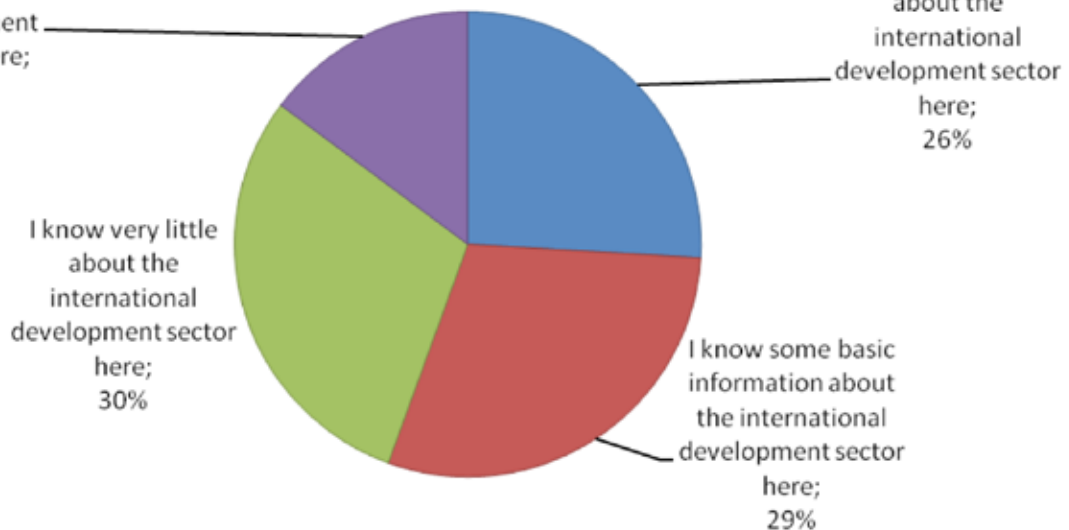
3.1.4 We asked RDWs to comment on their own level of knowledge about 'the international development sector', this being a prerequisite for some form of engagement. The graphic shows that the sample is evenly split between those with at least 'basic information' and those knowing 'very little' at best.

Are you active in any international development organisations currently?



I know next to nothing about the international development sector here; 15%

International Development Knowledge



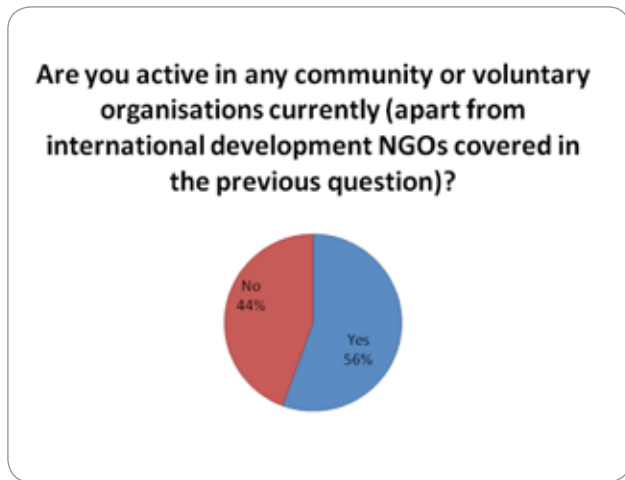
3.1.5 While the majority of the RDWs (56%) are not active in any international development organisation currently, those that are (44%) demonstrate that there is a considerable commitment to, and skills available for, the work. Leaving out paid professional activities, these active RDWs perform one or more of the following roles:

- Treasurer or other NGO Board / Advisory Group functions;
- Team-leader for volunteers;
- Administration work;
- Fundraising;
- International liaison;
- Campaigning.

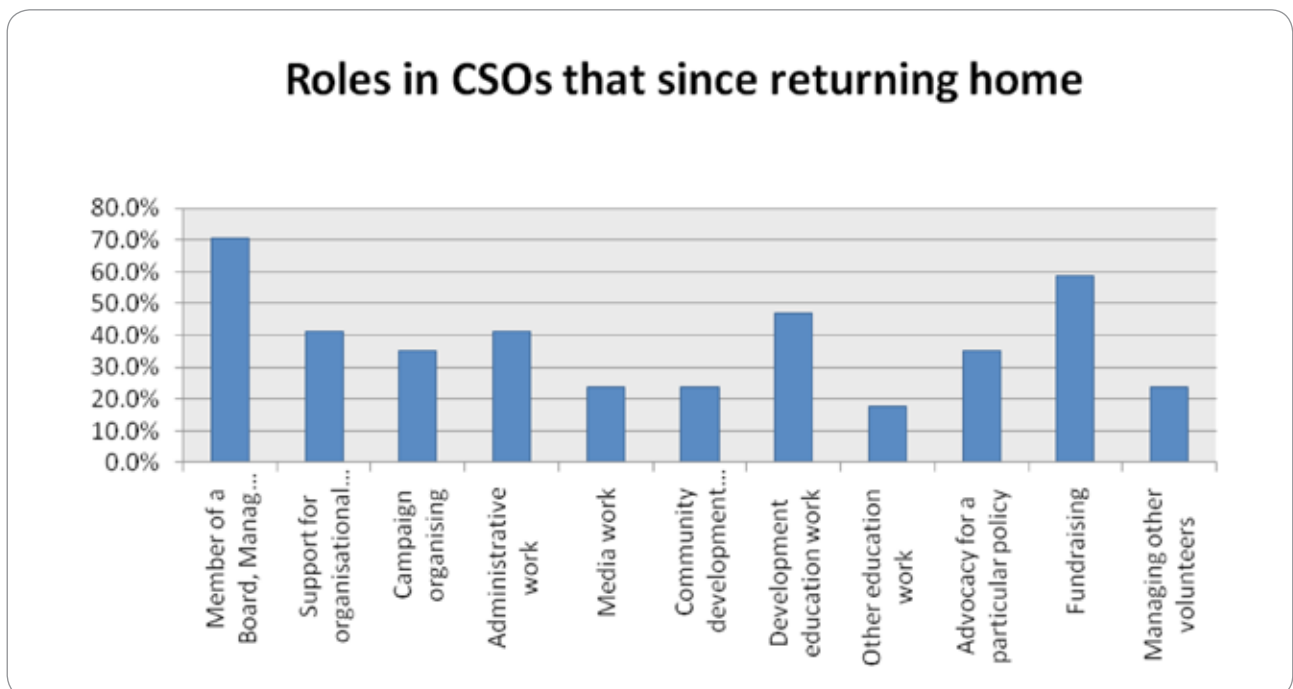
- CARE International UK
- Centre for Global Education
- Children in Crossfire
- Christian Aid
- Comhlámh
- Concern
- Friends of Africa
- Intervida
- Misean Cara
- Oxfam
- SEEDS Changaro Trust
- Trócaire
- Viatores Christi
- VMM
- War on Want

3.1.6 Those who are active, participate in these organisations: Amnesty International

3.1.7 On average, the RDWs active in these organisations contribute just under two days (13 hours, 15 minutes) each month to the agencies (we excluded one INGO employee from the calculation). Of course, engagement extends to many other organisations outside the formal development sector. The graphic shows that the majority (56%) are active in some other community or voluntary organisation (other than the INGO). All but two of the RDWs, restrict their involvement with civil society to one organisation (other than any INGO in which they are active).

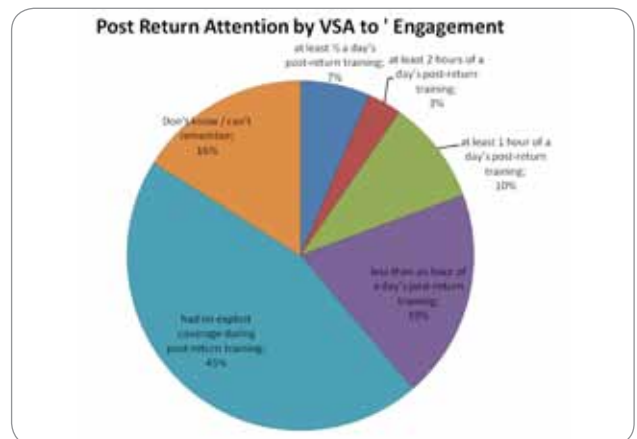
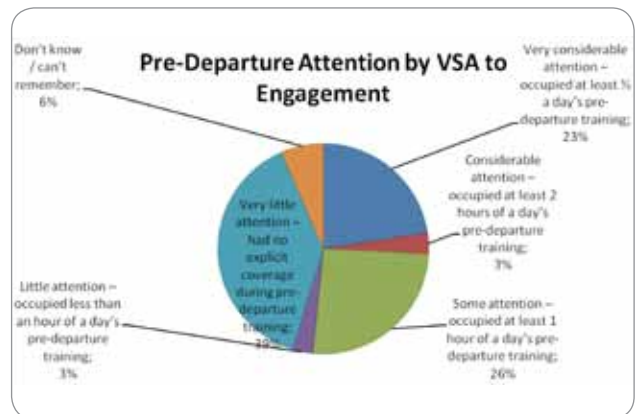


On average, these RDWs contribute the equivalent of 1.5 days labour each month to the civil society organisations (10 hours, 25 minutes). The next chart shows that the RDWs spend their time in working with the organisations on a wide range of roles, especially, serving on Boards or Committees (71%) and on fundraising (59%).



3.2 WHAT ATTENTION DID VSAS GIVE TO ENGAGEMENT?

3.2.1 One simple measure of the importance these RDWs' VSAs attached to their engagement is the duration of attention given to it during pre-departure and post-return. The graphics show the duration allocated during the training to engagement.



3.2.2 While half of the RDWs (52%) participated in pre-departure training during which engagement received at least one hour's explicit attention, a substantial proportion (39%) report there was 'no explicit coverage'. During post-return de-briefing, almost half (45%) reported 'no explicit coverage', while a further fifth (19%) had less than one hour to explore the issue. Although there are always difficult choices for VSAs to make with regard to what to include or not in post-return facilitation, it would appear that many are not striking an appropriate balance if they wish their RDWs to sustain their engagement. While the attention during pre-departure appears reasonable (for some), one may observe that in terms of timeliness, on the face of it, the attention would be better given post-return, as it is then, that the matter becomes salient in a more practical sense for RDWs. This provides an opportunity for the future initiative's work with VSAs, specifically the role the future initiative could fulfil in delivering a more appropriate quantum of engagement facilitation post-return. We recommend the action plan:



H. Include a strand of work on the contribution that could be made to post-return training by VSAs on RDWs' engagement.

3.2.3 Finally, with regard to VSAs' attention to the RDWs' engagement, we note that only two of the latter identified any recent 'practical activity' that their VSA organised that sought to facilitate their engagement.

3.3 HOW DO RDWs EVALUATE VSAs' ENGAGEMENT SUPPORTS?

3.3.1 We asked the RDWs to assess whether the support they received for engagement was 'worthwhile' or not. The table shows the responses. The striking feature of the table is that the percentage of the RDWs receiving any of the listed support items never exceeds 27%.

3.3.2 The forms of supports that were most often received by the RDWs from their VSAs were:

- Involving RDWs during pre-departure training on global justice issues for new development workers the agency is sending to the global South (27%);
- Involving RDWs as part of the training for the 'sending' agency's own staff on global justice (23%);
- Advice or training on giving presentations / 'talks' on global justice issues (19%).

- The other interesting point in the replies is that, where support was delivered, it was predominantly viewed as worthwhile although in a few cases, it is fairly evenly balanced between 'worthwhile' and 'not sure' whether it was so.



Valuation by RDWs of support activities that their sending agencies DID provide to facilitate the engagement of RDWs with global justice issues

		Count	%
Support on how to organise events on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	5	10%
	Not Sure	1	2%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	3	6%
Advice or training on giving presentations / 'talks' on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	7	15%
	Not Sure	1	2%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Advice or training on working with the media on raising awareness on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	4	8%
	Not Sure	0	0%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	2	4%
Advice or training on networking activities aiming to raise awareness on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	6	13%
	Not Sure	0	0%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Advice or training on ways to raise awareness on global justice issues through community-based organisations?	Worthwhile	3	6%
	Not Sure	1	2%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Advice or training on setting up groups aiming to raise awareness on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	1	2%
	Not Sure	1	2%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Advice or training on raising awareness on global justice issues more generally?	Worthwhile	5	10%
	Not Sure	0	0%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Use of RDWs as local 'ambassadors' for your agency on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	3	6%
	Not Sure	2	4%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	2	4%
Involving RDWs as part of the training for your 'sending' agency's own staff on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	9	19%
	Not Sure	0	0%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	2	4%
Involving RDWs during pre-departure training on global justice issues for new development workers?	Worthwhile	11	23%
	Not Sure	1	2%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Some other activity your agency considered appropriate to facilitate the engagement of its RDWs with global justice issues not covered above?	Worthwhile	5	10%
	Not Sure	0	0%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
	Don't Know	4	8%

3.4 HOW DO RDWS EVALUATE POTENTIAL ENGAGEMENT SUPPORTS?

3.4.1 As the next table shows, the RDWs who did not obtain each of the supports from their VSA, many would have welcomed the support, if it had been on offer, and this augurs well for the future initiative.

3.4.2 There are a number of noteworthy features in the table above: The proportion of RDWs in the previous table never exceed the 25% mark for receiving the support (regardless of their valuation) - here in this table it rarely falls below the 30% line for those who would have valued it as 'worthwhile', the exception is "Advice or training on setting up groups aiming to raise awareness on global justice issues" where it falls just short at 29%. What this suggests is that there is an appetite among RDWs for more and different inputs from VSAs than are currently on offer. Typically, the reason they are not on offer is a deficit in resources. There is a space for the future initiative to contribute to filling this gap. The types of support that it appears RDWs would have found 'definitely worthwhile', the high scorers, ie most welcome inputs, were:

- Advice or training on networking activities aiming to raise awareness on global justice issues (40%),
- Advice or training on ways to raise awareness on global justice issues through community-based organisations (40%),
- Advice or training on raising awareness on global justice issues more generally (38%),
- Involving RDWs as part of the training for your 'sending' agency's own staff on global justice issues (38%).

3.4.3 The last is noteworthy, as while this was more commonly offered by the VSAs, plainly not as often as the RDWs would have liked. There may be scope for using this interest in training new cohorts of RDWs to serve as part of the focus for the discussions between the sponsors and the VSAs. With regard to the other three noted, these were among the inputs least often offered by the VSAs. Reasonable numbers of the RDWs want networking, CBO skills and general awareness-raising skills, which they are not largely, getting from the VSA, there is an opportunity for the follow-up initiative to fill this gap. We recommend:



1. Networking, working with community-based organisations and general awareness raising should all feature in the follow-up initiative.

3.5 HOW DO RDWS EVALUATE VSAS' ADAPTATION SUPPORTS?

3.5.1 The table shows the RDWs' valuation of the support services they received from their VSAs.

Valuation by RDWs of support activities that their sending agencies DID provide to facilitate their 'coming back home'

		Count	%
Employment support for its RDWs?	Worthwhile	4	8%
	Not Sure	5	10%
	Not Worthwhile	2	4%
Wellbeing support (for example on readjustment issues) for its RDWs?	Worthwhile	10	21%
	Not Sure	5	10%
	Not Worthwhile	1	2%
General resettlement support for its RDWs?	Worthwhile	12	25%
	Not Sure	4	8%
	Not Worthwhile	2	4%
Other resettlement support for its RDWs, not covered above?	Worthwhile	2	4%
	Not Sure	0	0%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%

3.5.2 The important point here is the relatively low frequency of support, typically between one quarter and one third of the RDWs received each of the supports. The lowest of the three main types is, perhaps surprisingly, employment support (22%), and those that did receive this were more likely to be unsure whether it was 'worthwhile' or not compared to those, who definitely thought it was 'worthwhile'. While the 'worthwhile' majorities are larger for the other two main types (well-being and general support), it is worth noting, that there is more uncertainty about whether it was 'worthwhile' or not, than was the case for the engagement support the VSAs delivered. Below we summarise the content of support received under each of the types:

- Employment - appears modest, the most concrete examples of the support received were a 'list of jobs available in the sector', 'websites, advice re interviews', and 'printed information on getting back into National Health scheme and Income Tax system' - the exception is one RDW who noted receipt of a £1,000 resettlement grant;
- Well-being - positive perception of the Coming Home Weekends delivered by Comhlámh and

Valuation by RDWs of support activities that their sending agencies DID NOT provide to facilitate the engagement of RDWs with global justice issues

		Count	%
Support on how to organise events on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	16	33%
	Not Sure	5	10%
	Not Worthwhile	2	4%
	Don't Know	3	6%
Advice or training on giving presentations / 'talks' on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	15	31%
	Not Sure	7	15%
	Not Worthwhile	2	4%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Advice or training on working with the media on raising awareness on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	15	31%
	Not Sure	6	13%
	Not Worthwhile	6	13%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Advice or training on networking activities aiming to raise awareness on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	19	40%
	Not Sure	4	8%
	Not Worthwhile	4	8%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Advice or training on ways to raise awareness on global justice issues through community-based organisations?	Worthwhile	19	40%
	Not Sure	3	6%
	Not Worthwhile	4	8%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Advice or training on setting up groups aiming to raise awareness on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	14	29%
	Not Sure	6	13%
	Not Worthwhile	8	17%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Advice or training on raising awareness on global justice issues more generally?	Worthwhile	18	38%
	Not Sure	4	8%
	Not Worthwhile	3	6%
	Don't Know	1	2%
Use of RDWs as local 'ambassadors' for your agency on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	15	31%
	Not Sure	5	10%
	Not Worthwhile	4	8%
	Don't Know	2	4%
Involving RDWs as part of the training for your 'sending' agency's own staff on global justice issues?	Worthwhile	18	38%
	Not Sure	3	6%
	Not Worthwhile	1	2%
	Don't Know	0	0%
Involving RDWs during pre-departure training on global justice issues for new development workers?	Worthwhile	16	33%
	Not Sure	2	4%
	Not Worthwhile	1	2%
	Don't Know	0	0%
Some other activity your agency considered appropriate to facilitate the engagement of its RDWs with global justice issues not covered above?	Worthwhile	1	2%
	Not Sure	0	0%
	Not Worthwhile	4	8%
	Don't Know	5	10%

mostly of the counselling access the agency offers, although one RDW noted that s/he formed the opinion that her need was not deemed acute enough to avail of this;

- General resettlement - appears agencies relied heavily on referral of RDWs to Comhlámh, or tended to rely on occasional inputs.

3.6 HOW DO RDWs EVALUATE POTENTIAL ADAPTATION SUPPORTS?

3.6.1 The key feature in the table is that there are reasonable numbers of RDWs who would have welcomed more support for 'coming back home'.

Valuation by RDWs of support activities that their sending agencies DID NOT provide to facilitate their 'coming back home'

		Count	%
Employment support for its RDWs?	Worthwhile	12	25%
	Not Sure	3	6%
	Not Worthwhile	4	8%
Wellbeing support (for example on readjustment issues) for its RDWs?	Worthwhile	14	29%
	Not Sure	0	0%
	Not Worthwhile	1	2%
General resettlement support for its RDWs?	Worthwhile	10	21%
	Not Sure	2	4%
	Not Worthwhile	0	0%
Other resettlement support for its RDWs, not covered above?	Worthwhile	9	19%
	Not Sure	2	4%
	Not Worthwhile	2	4%

3.6.2 The percentages tend to be rather lower than for those who would have welcomed more engagement supports (typically percentages tend to be between one-half and one-quarter higher for the engagement supports). In addition we note that the uncertainty issue (RDWs being unsure about whether the support would have been worthwhile or not) is moderated here - when RDWs did not get the support, they tend much more often than not, to believe the support would have been worthwhile. Again, this augurs well for the follow-up initiative, suggesting that greater uptake among Northern RDWs of Comhlámh's support would be welcomed.

3.7 WHAT MOTIVATES RDWS TO ENGAGE?

3.7.1 The issue of motivation is central to understanding the engagement of RDWs. We explored this issue through asking RDWs to identify how relevant a variety of factors are to their decision-making on engagement using a four-point scale. The table shows the average score of the different items across the sample with the factors ranked according to the size of the mean score.

Motivations	N	Mean
My international volunteering experience motivates me	26	3.62
To help a cause I believe in	27	3.37
To fulfil my commitment to global justice	27	3.30
To meet like-minded people	27	3.15
For personal fulfilment	27	3.11
Have not found any volunteer opportunities of interest	27	2.70
To support the agency that facilitated me to work in the global South	27	2.56
I just don't have the time	27	2.52
Everything seems to happen in Dublin or Belfast and it is too far away	27	2.48
No one asked	27	2.41
I don't know enough about how to engage with global justice issues back home	27	2.22
My personal situation makes volunteering impractical	27	2.19
To fulfil my religious obligations or beliefs	27	1.56
My previous volunteer experience was unpleasant	27	1.19
Total	26	

3.7.2 The most interesting feature of the table is the prevalence of broadly 'idealistic' concerns among the top three motivators (the earlier volunteering experience, the 'cause I believe in' and commitment to global justice). The networking desire ranks 4th while 'personal fulfilment' ranks 5th. On average, all these motivators are operative, in terms of the scale, between 'probably' and 'definitely' relevant. The factors that fall (on average) between 'possibly' and 'probably'

relevant are not having found any volunteering opportunity, supporting the VSA, time pressure, distance from Belfast or Dublin, the absence of an invitation to engage, the absence of sufficient knowledge, and personal circumstances. While the lowest scoring factors (religious obligation and an unpleasant volunteering experience) are on average 'probably irrelevant', they are important to small numbers of RDWs. The next table shows more detail.

Relevance of Different Motivations for Engagement		Count	%
5. For personal fulfilment	Definitely Irrelevant	2	4%
	Possibly Relevant	6	13%
	Probably Relevant	6	13%
	Definitely Relevant	13	27%
1. My international volunteering experience motivates me	Definitely Irrelevant	0	0%
	Possibly Relevant	3	6%
	Probably Relevant	4	8%
	Definitely Relevant	19	40%
3. To fulfil my commitment to global justice	Definitely Irrelevant	0	0%
	Possibly Relevant	6	13%
	Probably Relevant	7	15%
	Definitely Relevant	14	29%
13. To fulfil my religious obligations or beliefs	Definitely Irrelevant	20	42%
	Possibly Relevant	3	6%
	Probably Relevant	1	2%
	Definitely Relevant	2	4%
	Don't Know	1	2%
2. To help a cause I believe in	Definitely Irrelevant	3	6%
	Possibly Relevant	1	2%
	Probably Relevant	6	13%
	Definitely Relevant	17	35%
7. To support the agency that facilitated me to work in the global South	Definitely Irrelevant	9	19%
	Possibly Relevant	4	8%
	Probably Relevant	6	13%
	Definitely Relevant	6	13%
	Don't Know	2	4%
4. To meet like-minded people	Definitely Irrelevant	2	4%
	Possibly Relevant	7	15%
	Probably Relevant	3	6%
	Definitely Relevant	15	31%
9. Everything seems to happen in Dublin or Belfast and it is too far away	Definitely Irrelevant	11	23%
	Possibly Relevant	3	6%
	Probably Relevant	3	6%
	Definitely Relevant	9	19%
	Don't Know	1	2%

Continued overleaf

6. Have not found any volunteer opportunities of interest	Definitely Irrelevant	9	19%
	Possibly Relevant	3	6%
	Probably Relevant	6	13%
	Definitely Relevant	5	10%
	Don't Know	4	8%
11. I don't know enough about how to engage with global justice issues	Definitely Irrelevant	9	19%
	Possibly Relevant	7	15%
	Probably Relevant	7	15%
	Definitely Relevant	4	8%
8. I just don't have the time	Definitely Irrelevant	6	13%
	Possibly Relevant	8	17%
	Probably Relevant	7	15%
	Definitely Relevant	5	10%
	Don't Know	1	2%
12. My personal situation makes volunteering impractical	Definitely Irrelevant	12	25%
	Possibly Relevant	5	10%
	Probably Relevant	4	8%
	Definitely Relevant	5	10%
	Don't Know	1	2%
14. My previous volunteer experience was unpleasant	Definitely Irrelevant	24	50%
	Possibly Relevant	2	4%
	Definitely Relevant	1	2%
10. No one asked	Definitely Irrelevant	8	17%
	Possibly Relevant	7	15%
	Probably Relevant	5	10%
	Definitely Relevant	7	15%

3.7.3 The interesting features of the table are:

- the continuing relevance of the development work in the global South to the decision-making about engagement, for nearly half of the sample (48%) this is probably or definitely relevant;
- the general irrelevance of any 'unpleasant' experience during the overseas work to the decision-making about engagement, for only one person is this a consideration; and
- the general tendency for the motivator to be 'relevant' or not, ie it is not a matter of degree for most, they are 'definitely relevant' or 'definitely irrelevant', although there are exceptions, for example, supporting the VSA and distance from Dublin or Belfast.

3.7.4 While there are considerable limitations to the extent to which any further statistical analysis is appropriate (sample size and the skewness noted above), for the sake of obtaining as much insight as possible from the data, we applied the Principal Components Analysis (PCA)

technique to the data. In essence, this involves applying matrix algebra to the data to discover underlying simple linear patterns to the data, all of which reduce the original complex form of the responses to a simpler form, 'simpler' in the sense that it reduces the original fourteen motivators to a smaller number. Below we report on the results of the PCA, which identifies three 'components' that account for just under half of the original variance (47%) and the results are fairly easy to interpret meaningfully. For the sake of clarity, we report only strong motivators (those that correlate at a level of .50 or more with the component).

3.7.5 The three components (they are of similar statistical magnitude, ie the variance is fairly evenly split between the three, of the motivations of RDWs in their decision-making on engagement) are:

- one that we could label a 'personal mission' dimension, which features 'personal fulfilment,

the overseas experience, and commitment to global justice, and for these mission-driven RDWs the networking / sociability aspect is important, while pressure of time (they believe) is not;

- one that recalls logistical issues, distance from Belfast and Dublin, and likely related to this, having no-one ask of them that they decide about engagement (likely as if one is too far away geographically, those who might ask never have the opportunity to do so); and
- finally a motivational dimension, associated with religious obligation, and markedly with people who are sufficiently confident of their own knowledge for engagement, but for whom the absence of volunteering opportunities seems to be important.

The Principal Components of Motivation to Engage			
	Component		
	1	2	3
For personal fulfilment	.69		
My international volunteering experience motivates me	.64		
To fulfil my commitment to global justice	.63		
To meet like-minded people	.54		
I just don't have the time	-.53		
Everything seems to happen in Dublin or Belfast and it is too far away		.81	
No one asked		.57	
To help a cause I believe in			
To support the agency that facilitated me to work in the global South			
My personal situation makes volunteering impractical			
I don't know enough about how to engage with global justice issues back home			-.59
To fulfil my religious obligations or beliefs			.58
Have not found any volunteer opportunities of interest			.51
My previous volunteer experience was unpleasant			

RECOMMENDATION 5

J.

RECOMMENDATION 5

K.

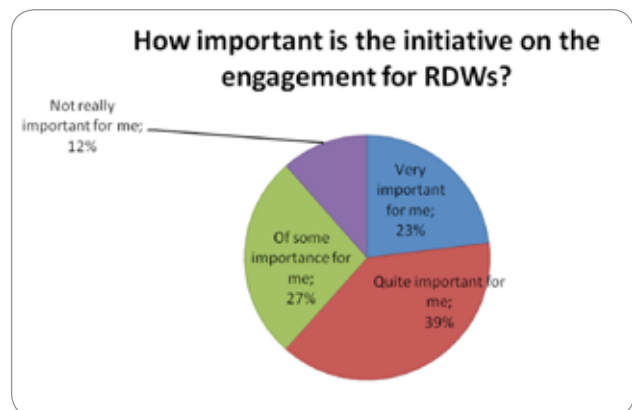
3.7.6 In light of the above, we recommend the follow-up initiative advance the engagement of the RDWs by:

Articulating a persuasive communication that resonates with the 'personal mission' dimension, a message that recalls the RDWs' original commitment to global justice.

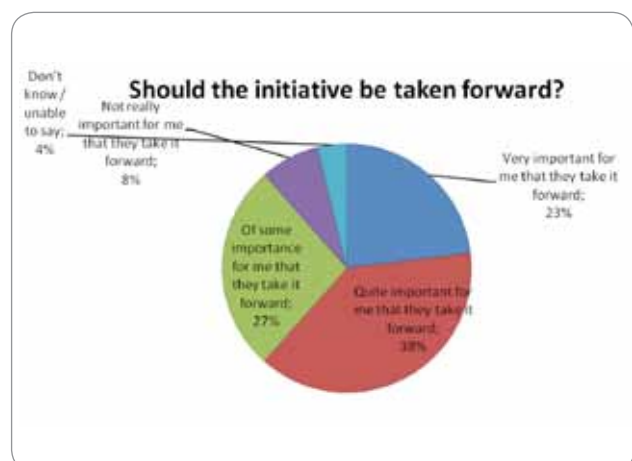
Considering a credible form of regional coverage, perhaps through a 'county' structure.

3.8 WHAT ARE RDWS' ATTITUDES TO A POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP INITIATIVE?

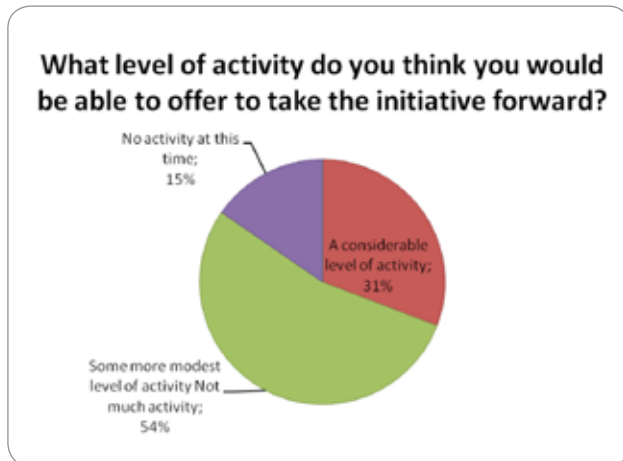
3.8.1 The large majority (88%) consider a follow-up initiative to be at least 'of some importance' to them. Nearly one quarter (23%) consider it very important (23%) and just under two-fifths (39%) view it as 'quite important'. The graphic shows the full breakdown.



3.8.2 It is important for this large majority (88%) that CGE and Comhlámh take a follow-up initiative forward, but we should note that the RDWs vary according to the level of importance they ascribe to it, it is more important for nearly two-thirds (62%) than for the others. The graphic shows the detail.



3.8.3 The level of activity the sponsors may expect mostly falls between those willing to offer a 'considerable level of activity' (31%) and 'a lower level of activity' (54%). The sponsors should note none 'volunteered' for a 'very considerable level of activity', while on the other hand none opted for 'no activity at all'.



3.8.4 We summarise next what they want from a possible follow-up initiative and the issues they think it should address:

- Information - on what events and meetings are taking place (in CGE and elsewhere);
- Networking - with other RDWs and with other initiatives in both the North and South of Ireland;
- Development education - discussion on issues including that of the role of volunteers, how to engage (including talks with students), "further learning and action at home", "How can ordinary people influence global change?"
- Campaigning - Advocacy on "poverty eradication", "immigration", "trafficking of women and children."

3.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP INITIATIVE

3.9.1 The implications of the material presented in this section are:

- 1)** The mapping exercise identified only eight RDWs who had carried out any engagement-related voluntary activities and this is despite the considerable efforts to include as many RDWs as possible in the survey. These eight individuals could provide a nucleus of individuals for participation in the future initiative. However, it is evident that this is far from a sufficient number for a follow-up initiative to have anything but a

marginal active user-base. However, we should bear in mind some of the 'obvious' reasons why this number is so low: mostly no request has been made to RDWs to participate; roughly half believe it to be difficult to 'do' engagement; and only a quarter of them consider that they are 'quite' knowledgeable about global justice issues. This suggests that there is some important work to be done with the RDW community to build sufficient confidence, competence and knowledge for engagement to take place. We recommend the action plan:

L.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure there is attention given to build sufficient confidence, competence and knowledge for engagement among each year's intake of 'new' RDWs.

- 2)** The RDWs, who are active, tend to be very active. Those still involved in INGOs give up an equivalent of around one-weekend each month to it, while those active in other civil society organisations give a little, but not much, less to these organisations, fulfilling substantial roles in each. This suggests that there is likely little time left in these people's lives to contribute more. While there may be a skilled nucleus of potential 'lead' participants (those currently active), the emphasis in the first year should be to rapidly identify their successors from among the inactive category. The issues of 'burnout', 'over-commitment', etc, are all present. We recommend the action plan:

M.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritise during its first year the recruitment of 'new' RDWs to reduce vulnerability of any follow-up initiative to over-reliance on currently highly active RDWs.

- 3)** Only half of these RDWs discussed engagement for one hour or more during training before departure and only two-thirds had even this minimum quantum after return. This reinforces the desirability of the follow-up initiative's strand of work with VSAs including inputs to the pre-departure, but even more, the post-return, training. Only one quarter of the RDWs received any of the reasonably wide range of possible engagement supports on which we asked them to comment, although where they did, they mostly viewed it as worthwhile. When we asked the RDWs to evaluate how worthwhile they would have found the engagement supports that their VSA did not provide, typically 40% of them thought that each of the inputs would have been worthwhile. This implies that there is a

reasonable level of hidden demand among RDWs for the supports, which the VSAs do not provide, that the CGE, Comhlámh and other development organisations could potentially provide. Our recommendation highlights networking, working with CBOs and general awareness raising.

- 4) With regard to adaptation support, the mapping exercise suggests that this is only being delivered to a minority of RDWs, between a quarter and a third of them. Where RDWs did receive adaptation support, this was delivered by Comhlámh. There is an opportunity here for the follow-up initiative to strengthen Comhlámh's support in this respect. Principally this would be through complementing the existing marketing of this support. There is some suggestion in the data on the evaluation of the supports RDWs did not receive (in essence, would they have thought them worthwhile), that awareness of what such supports might be is modest, and this implies that the future initiative could facilitate Comhlámh's marketing through clarifying for RDWs what the benefits of the support actually are. We recommend the action plan:



N. Consider how the future initiative may contribute to the marketing of Comhlámh's post-return supports to RDWs, in particular clarifying the nature of the benefits these provide for RDWs and facilitating greater numbers of Northern RDWs to avail of these.

- 5) In relation to the motivation underlying the RDWs' decision-making, it appears that what influences RDWs most to engage is a mix of the following: the continuing salience of a 'personal mission', an idealistic and altruistic 'driver' which is important for their personal fulfilment; a logistical concern (for those living outside the Belfast area) who, being outside the city, are more likely not to have been asked (to engage); and a sense of religious obligation for whom the absence of volunteering opportunities is an issue.
- 6) On the follow-up initiative itself, two-thirds of the RDWs consider it to be at least 'quite' and a quarter consider it to be 'very' important for them. All but a few do want Comhlámh and CGE to take the initiative forward and most of these offer at least some level of activity to support it. The level of support seems sufficient for the sponsors to consider advancing the work beyond the research stage.

4 UNDERSTANDING RDWS' NEEDS & INTERESTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 In this section, we report on the qualitative dimension of the mapping exercise. We note the RDWs' expressed needs and interests with regard to the follow-up initiative and comment on their experiences, usually but not always, through Comhlámh, of support they have received. We explore the general adaptation, counselling and professional development support needs in the first half of the section and then move on to interest in development education, campaigning and networking in the second half. We also comment on the RDWs' perspectives on the connection of the future initiative to VSAs.

4.2 GENERAL ADAPTATION NEEDS

'the right time'

4.2.1 One aspect underlying the success of the future initiative is the ability of its participation channels, through which RDWs engage, to accommodate the different life circumstances of RDWs, which frames both the timing that 'works' for them and their level of interest in fulfilling 'lead' roles. This implies that the participation channels will be open, not just in an 'everybody is welcome' sense, but more than this, that they will have as a primary structural feature, permanence of the channels' openness. The immediate starting point for the participation channels is when the RDW returns home, but for Andrea "when you first come home you are so taken up [with other matters]" and 'the right time' to engage may not be in the early period after return, for some it may be, for others it won't be. Only the RDW will know when that time is and it will be important that the future initiative creates the channel of engagement which is open to the RDW when the 'time is right'. A primary constraint on the voluntary labour that RDWs will devote is their time availability. For Andrea, she believes some RDWs will be willing to contribute significant time but this will of necessity "fit" into their life circumstances.

'busy lives'

4.2.2 Mary exemplifies Andrea's point on the need for the future initiative to fit the context of RDWs' lives. Mary "has enough on" in her own life already. She is aware of the Bewley's series of debates organised by Comhlámh in Dublin and would welcome similar events in Belfast. She is likely typical too in the level of activity to which she might commit. Thus she "would be interested in assisting the project, but I'm not going to take a lead."

'distance'

4.2.3 The issue of distance is central to the thinking of the sponsors on the follow-up initiative. They recognise how distance from Dublin may have served as a disincentive for some Northern RDWs to avail of Comhlámh's activities. CGE is also aware of the issue, as for many Belfast may also be too far from where they live for them to readily participate in its activities. Onya highlights the need for the follow-up initiative to have a geographical reach well out Belfast. Living in Donegal, while events in Derry would be a possibility for her, Letterkenny would be more accessible, while Dublin is impractical and in the event she was unable to participate in the Coming Home Weekend that Comhlámh offered although she would have liked to do so.

'risk of drifting'

4.2.4 Ian also attended Comhlámh's Coming Home Weekend and his experience was a positive one "... that was good... it was a good space for us... [Comhlámh] were the only ones who were offering anything." He subsequently facilitated other Comhlámh events for RDWs although sustained involvement in Comhlámh development education activities was impractical for reason of distance. He implies the follow-up

initiative could usefully provide “guidance for the next steps [for RDWs]... steering them [so that they are] not ‘drifting’ and ‘losing’ themselves.” This would involve an active approach to the promotion of the follow-up initiative’s activities among RDWs during the early period of return, a point that echoes other RDWs’ perspectives. adaptation support ‘more process than event’

4.2.5 Martha believes “when people come back, it’s vital for good quality support... Comhlámh weekends are very useful but other avenues [are required].” The reflection on the shared experience of development work is important for her. Rita also attended the Comhlámh Coming Home Weekend, which “was worthwhile... it helped me to get to a ‘place’” and while she did have a one-to-one debriefing “mine really happened in the weekend.” She still maintains an involvement with Comhlámh and indeed facilitates sessions for it and another VSA. On the debriefing, rather than a discrete event, and while acknowledging that it should not become ‘counselling’, it “could be more of a process... that reverse culture shock was a very delayed process for me... [a more ‘process’ orientated debriefing] it would speed up that [adaptation]... and flag up stuff for people that may come up for them”.

4.2.6 The issue of geography is an important consideration for her as, with regard to engagement activities, “it was a pity there was nothing in your own town.” Her vision of the future initiative is a full-blown Northern Comhlámh as “campaigning, development education... wouldn’t that be great to have that here.” Later in the interview she notes “there’s probably an untapped group... [ie] a lot of people from Protestant churches.” Like others, she identifies a role for the follow-up initiative in pre-departure training, implying this need not necessarily be through VSAs, recruiting “through the different churches, youth groups ...schools, engaging people who are going overseas.”

4.2.7 Jane like most of the RDWs we interviewed attended a Comhlámh Coming Home Weekend, on the whole was positive, especially the discussion among people with like experiences; “there was a very good presenter who helped to take us ‘back’, [it was] very emotional. “Later in the interview she notes the benefits of the weekend bringing RDWs from different VSAs together as “it was better that it was not a little club [ie from one VSA].” However other content was “variable... the last session ... about getting

back into work... was repetitive... it was a dead-end... [and] it needs a little sharpening... not enough meat on that... [There] was very little on getting engaged... for example very little on, for example, doing presentations. I didn’t seem to get the practical information... Young people were desperately anxious to get back into work... It was a wider vision [that was needed].” Jane would have welcomed a more in-depth treatment of, for example, labour market issues and noted that the employment material tended to focus on employment in Rol, whereas, for example, with regard to health and social care employment, arrangements in the North are quite different. She echoes the views of Rita (and Ian) that the support RDWs require is more process than event as “especially in the first weeks, there is a lack of social contact ... [and] families are very anxious for them to get back into work... They need an opportunity for a ‘listening ear’, from a confidante but not a counsellor... I think it would be good if there was follow-up during the year... an arc over the year... affirmation that we recognise what you did.”

4.3 COUNSELLING SUPPORT NEEDS

from ‘essential to undesirable’

4.3.1 There is a wide range of perspectives on the issue of counselling support needs. The more general view among the RDWs is that while s/he did not require it, since others do, it forms an appropriate part of the menu of support that the future initiative should facilitate Comhlámh to deliver. For the minority, who did avail of the service, the experience ranged from highly therapeutic through to ineffective. One lone voice disputes the appropriateness of any counselling support.

4.3.2 Siobhan, who did attend Comhlámh’s Coming Home Weekend also raises the issue of ‘distance’, with regard to the possibility of counselling support, recalls that she “kind of wish [she] had [taken it up] but I thought it was [limited to] Dublin.” Working in an Irish INGO since returning, there is a sense that its social networks may provide much of the support she requires post-return. She considers the future initiative should attend to “sign-posting if options are [out] there”.

4.3.3 Andrea recalled experiencing a ‘sense of loss’ on returning. She availed of the counselling support

which Comhlámh facilitates but she “wasn’t ready to talk about [her] experiences” at that time. Were the future initiative to offer access to counselling support through Comhlámh, this implies that the timeframe within which such support is on offer may require careful consideration.

4.3.4 For Gordon provision of counselling is not an appropriate priority for the future initiative, as the allocation of public resources to meet these needs will inevitably diminish those available for the reflective learning that for him is the priority. While Gordon is doubtful that counselling support is justified, Mary did avail of it, although the experience was not markedly positive, while “it was OK... I didn’t gel with her [the counsellor].” She believes this was a result of the limited range of counselling personnel available to Comhlámh but practicing in Belfast - “If I’d been in Dublin, [there would have been] probably more choice.”

4.3.5 Martha recognises that counselling support is important for some, although she did not require it herself, while for Jane, she “didn’t think I needed the counselling” although she does recall, that on her first break home, she “felt I was dream-walking.” Jane is sensitive to the needs of some RDWs for counselling support, recalling how, at the Comhlámh Coming Home Weekend, she met “another [who] said she felt so vulnerable.”

4.3.6 After work in Asia with extremely marginalised young people, addressing multiple acute needs including those arising from prostitution and child abuse, there is no doubt for Mark, with regard to Comhlámh counselling support “100 per cent we needed them [Comhlámh]... for a while you can say when we came back, we were at sea... We were just left wondering what it was all about... It was a fantastic help, Comhlámh certainly helped a lot after coming back.”

4.4 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT NEEDS

4.4.1 Only two of our interviewees availed of career support, one through acquiring new skills, which she uses in her work, and the other, who did not act on the guidance she did receive. Siobhan is atypical among those we interviewed for having availed of “Comhlámh training of trainers... [which] I found ... was really useful and gave me a lot of options” and she made use of the skills she acquired during her employer INGO’s training of its short-term development workers. Her experience of both Comhlámh

and CGE is highly positive. Of Comhlámh she notes “it’s a real resource ... [as] they have a real experience of working with RDWs... so that they can bring it back for people.” On CGE, she recalls how it’s Making Connections: The Global Dimension and Minorities Project “really values where people are coming from” and she feels this project could provide a model for the follow-up initiative to emulate which would “support the normalisation of global education... [through which participants] brought back stuff to their own sector.”

4.4.2 Rita availed of the Comhlámh career’s advice and although she recalls “I don’t think, I didn’t really follow through [on the advice]” and it is only recently, after five years back, that her current employment satisfies her professionally as “it’s the first time I’ve felt settled back home, [and] it took me a couple of years [to re-adapt to home].” Later in the interview she expresses the important benefit Comhlámh input, especially the Coming Home Weekend, was for her, “I wonder how much I would have struggled if I had not had that.”

4.5 INTEREST IN DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

4.5.1 There is a substantial appetite among those we interviewed for the follow-up initiative to provide development education opportunities. A core theme to the commentary on the form that this would take is that of reflection on, and learning from, a dialogue between RDWs about their experiences overseas. For the reflective learning to translate into action by RDWs that engages others, our sources – for the most part and in different ways – pointed to civil society as a primary audience.

creating a convincing ‘dev ed’ narrative from storytelling

4.5.2 On returning home, Andrea would have welcomed an opportunity to contribute to development education. Recall that Andrea experienced something of a ‘sense of loss’ on returning home, and there is a suggestion, here, that this would have provided, a personal benefit for her, “I would have been delighted if someone had asked me to give a talk at a school.” Development education did not figure as part of the debriefing provided by her VSA as “it wasn’t part of the conversation.” For her RDWs have “a story to tell” and the future initiative would provide an opportunity for RDWs to do so.

- 4.5.3** The reflective learning issue is to the forefront of the thinking of Gordon on the core of RDWs' needs and how this future initiative could meet these. Through discussion, RDWs will have "the opportunity to engage with other people's experience... [enabling them to decide] whether they want to rethink [their own views]." An important issue that will arise for the future initiative is how to ensure that the discussion of the experiences is facilitated "in a way that is comparable."
- 4.5.4** The issue here goes beyond the technical quality of the facilitation process. Andrea's point on the different parts of the RDW constituency is relevant here. While the 'story-telling' of the individual RDWs is central to the process, the synthetic narrative that the follow-up initiative will produce has to maintain resonance with these stories, while identifying the underlying commonality in the stories, representing these in a way that carries the energy of the personal stories but translates these into a form appropriate to development education. For Gordon during the follow-up initiative's formative stage, with initial meetings of RDWs, it is essential that they "find these early meetings engaging... [and] the process will define the engagement."
- 4.5.5** His vision is one in which its staff (by assumption) "will have to find a way to engage themselves [with RDWs' issues]." Gordon is "utterly against" an exclusive focus by the follow-up initiative in the delivery of development education in the institutions of the formal education sector. For him the 'third sector' provides a more appropriate principal focus, in particular on "adults who have chosen to become engaged." In our opinion there is much merit to this view as, apart from the intrinsic merit of extending development education into civil society organisations, it would provide a way of ensuring that the initiative does not become embroiled in unproductive competition with other providers (including CGE) active in the formal sector. In terms of the early substantive issues, that a follow-up initiative could address is "the consensus on 0.7% [of GNP for overseas development that is] unravelling." However, he cautions that we are entering "an ice age for development education funding... [making] this a vital time." He notes that the sector needs to "stop the idea that international development is what happens 'over there'... development is what happens here."
- 4.5.6** If the general macro-context is not propitious, the emerging concerns with climate change and well-being suggests to him that the future initiative should "link up not just with overseas development work... but [also] tackling local issues... [for example] fuel poverty." Not all of the RDWs with whom we discussed how the research should be followed up share this view, for example, Mary is doubtful that there is an audience for this narrative nor that linking the any future initiative to CBOs will prove possible as "community workers wouldn't have an interest." However, she does consider that the initiative could fulfil an important role in highlighting the HIV issue. This recalls Gordon and Andrea's related point that a future initiative will have to find a way to uncover the commonality among the different constituencies of RDWs.
- 4.5.7** Onya's perspective resonates with the story-telling motif Andrea articulates. She recalls how her own awareness of development issues started from her friendship with another RDW, through "just by being the person she was" the friend awakened her interest in global justice issues. Onya is less able than she would wish to pursue her interest in development education (due to caring and other life circumstances) although she intends to explore advanced study options in the near future. She like Mary is, in her own mind, with regard to campaigning, "not an instigator" although she has in fact started a local shop to generate finance for higher education in her placement country. She is highly motivated by engagement and would like to avail of training in it, although distance is an important consideration for her.
- 4.5.8** Siobhan shares the perspective of others whom we interviewed that the provision of opportunities for reflection on the development work experience should be at the core of a follow-up initiative. For her such a process is an expression of "solidarity... [as through it one may] hear other people's and then hear yours [ie experiences]... When you go overseas, you get a different lens. I am "really passionate about development education." Her own development education practice makes use of the type of CBOs to which Gordon alluded in his perspective on the appropriate focus of the future initiative. For her those concerned with women's, youth and well-being issues could all become potential engagement targets for a follow-up initiative. She as a development education practitioner would welcome "a resource of people [RDWs] we

might be able to use" in other projects that are underway.

4.5.9 Martha is also a development education practitioner. For her the contribution the research and the implementation of its recommendations could make is to move beyond the introductory character of much of the development education currently on offer. Her vision is for "high quality, in-depth work with RDWs... Comhlámh have these courses and [we need to] transfer them over to here... linking it into business, health sectors." Like Siobhan, Martha notes that CGE's Making Connections: The Global Dimension and Minorities Project offers a model for work with RDWs. She is convinced "there is an audience out there." She shares the perspectives of other RDWs we interviewed who drew attention to the range of CBOs and FBOs with which a future initiative could work. She, like Ian, participated in the earlier Northern Comhlámh project and believes with him that staffing, likely one part-time position, is required for the initial formative period.

voluntary development education experiences

4.5.10 Ian volunteered post-return with an INGO on a schools-based development education project but "it fizzled out... as the guy who set it up was seconded from a government department... then he got called back." He recalls that fundraising was part of the rationale for the project but "it wasn't something I pushed." Rita's experience is interesting here as immediately after her return she "talked with [Proper Name of major Irish INGO and other agencies]... but I got a bit disheartened... it just seemed there wasn't a lot of avenues, but I guess I had to be proactive." However, she had in fact been 'proactive'. She has a particular view on the combination of fundraising and development education, as "when people are raising money, they aren't asking the right questions."

4.5.11 Jane "found the most difficult thing was the apathy... there is no craving for knowledge... Comhlámh work could focus more on this [global justice]." She makes the point that 'Fair Trade' brands are not enough, serving as a balm for conscience rather than seriously addressing the global justice imperative. While engagement should be the primary focus, she points to the personal benefits like Andrea for the RDW of

taking part in such activities that could help to ensure they do not "feel abandoned... feel a bit used" by the VSA on returning home as their engagement with development education activity would ameliorate such feelings. On engagement, distance was an issue for Jane, she "didn't see any way into it, the opportunities weren't presented and I didn't go seeking for them [in part] as everything is in Dublin." In fact, Jane 'does' development education. She recalls how she "assists a friend... [who] gives talks... [at] country markets... women's associations who are looking for speakers... [at] churches... She encourages people... [who] become animated... people are constantly asking about corruption... It is going back to the old 1950s' values, a missionary [perspective], they are fascinated about my experiences." We should note that her own VSA was not faith based. Her comments recall the 'lost civic generation' popularised in Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone*. She believes this older generation is more interested in the issues than more recent cohorts are.

4.5.12 Mark maintains his connection to development issues, in part through a career change to working with a faith-based VSA, "[m]y wife and I have still a Thailand connection... We did raise awareness among our own community... [through] return sessions for family and friends, on, for example, [the] child sex trade." He continues to organise fundraising through sales of products the Thai orphanages make. While time (from employment and family commitments) is a pressing issue for Mark, and he would wish to see a follow-up initiative have a clear focus as "a scattergun approach [wouldn't work for him but] if someone wanted us to talk on Thailand, that would work."

4.6 INTEREST IN CAMPAIGNING

4.6.1 Siobhan is an active campaigner on numerous issues, including "'people before profit'... social justice... ethical investment...environment... women's issues" in which she adopts "a horizontal way of working... [with] no hierarchy... it's been fuelled by my overseas experience, [from which she has] learnt so much... [for example] how to run meetings [respectful listening and positive reinforcement] which made such a difference."

4.6.2 Ian has been involved in a variety of campaigns including lobbying politicians and notes that were the future initiative to adopt a campaigning role, such work requires considerable energy and time commitment. For Martha, campaigning and

development education are inseparable, “I don’t see campaigning as separate from education... I can’t separate them.” The issues that might be advanced through education / campaigning “entirely depends on them [ie participating RDWs]... It’s up to individuals to make their own [issue] groups... RDWs can be catalysts... [while] the project can provide avenues... make them aware of the organisations and campaigns... strengthening these people’s resolve... in a way that they feel ‘this is making a difference.’”

4.6.3 Rita is surely typical of many RDWs as “I don’t involve myself in campaigning... [it] scares me a little... putting your voice out there... I always think I know so little... part of me likes to keep my head down... I’m a bit embarrassed ... [that] I haven’t been involved... I used to volunteer when I first came back... I fell off the edge [of volunteering networks as] I was catching up with friends and families... I do feel guilty” although she has in fact been active in supporting Comhlámh’s development education activities. Jane had tried to pursue campaigning work through lobbying MPs among others. However, she recalls she “let the whole thing go from a lobbying point of view [as they] were not really that interested.” Interestingly she feels that perhaps working through Comhlámh might have allowed for greater progress with the campaign.

4.7 INTEREST IN NETWORKING

4.7.1 The networking dimension of returning home was important for Andrea. Connecting with a community of people with a set of personally powerful experiences that share a fundamental similarity would be highly valued by Andrea. The form of such a network that she wants is one which;

- would tend to have a loose structure of issue-groups, into which RDWs could enter and leave with ease;
- would be inclusive of RDWs whose VSAs fall outside the ‘traditional’ Irish aid agencies, a perspective aligned with our comments elsewhere on FBOs; and
- where there is attention to the diverse perspectives on engagement that arise from the different development experiences (short-term emergency response versus long-term civil society development), with the follow-up initiative facilitating a shared agenda to emerge on “what messages do you want for your community [of RDWs]”; and
- have a broad range of organisations supporting

it, possibly some ‘advisory group’ device for the VSAs’ voice;

- would have a primary person-centred focus on the needs and interests of RDWs;
- be accommodated within CGE;
- would be planned annually by RDWs with RDWs alongside the sponsors represented on its primary board of governance; and
- would attend to gender balance.

4.7.2 The issue of inclusion is taken up by Gordon. He notes that some VSAs (Voluntary Service Overseas and Tools for Solidarity) do host regular meetings of their RDWs. It will be important that the follow-up initiative achieve an appropriate form of cooperation with these parallel processes. While Gordon is doubtful that FBOs will prove to be productive for the future initiative, he acknowledges they are the principal form of civic participation for many, in particular those from the Protestant tradition and cites the Presbyterian Women’s Association as a possible audience among people of this tradition. For Gordon the governance of any follow-up work is an issue. He observes that CGE “doesn’t have experience itself of development work [ie overseas development work].” In our opinion, it is the blend of Comhlámh membership’s experience in development work with CGE’s track record in development education that qualifies the sponsors’ lead role in the follow-up initiative.

4.7.3 Onya highlights the need for the follow-up work to facilitate networking among RDWs living outside the main urban areas. She would welcome more networking opportunities and she “knows in [her] heart the only way to get involved is to see who is out there [in Donegal]... there is a cohort [of RDWs] around”. This points to the value of the follow-up initiative attending to the maintenance of a simple contact list to facilitate RDWs to interact with each other outside of the more organised events through informal telephone, e-mail and ad-hoc contacts. She would very much welcome a list of RDWs resident in Donegal. In our opinion, facilitating these sorts of interactions between RDWs is likely to be important for a future engagement initiative alongside more formal events. Onya is typical in some respects of a more mature RDW steeped in a tradition of civic-mindedness. She would wish to support a future initiative through her working as a link person for RDWs in Donegal and, potentially, her shop serving as local accommodation for events in the area.

4.7.4 For Siobhan the networking dimension of any follow-up work should be “something informal.” For Ian the idea of informal networking with other RDWs would have been attractive on his return but not now as “I don’t know if now I would want that... I’ve found a way that I’m still connected [with placement country projects]... when I came back, yes.” He recalls that the earlier Northern Comhlámh project was overly dependent on one individual and “that’s the health warning.” He, like a number of our sources, assumes that any follow-up work would have some level of staffing and would not rely solely on voluntary effort.

4.7.5 Martha would welcome the informal networking, “opportunities for [the] social side.” She suggests that the follow-up initiative should make use of ICT to “keep people linked in.” For Rita it is important that the initiative facilitates a dialogue among relatively small numbers of RDWs, between “people with different knowledge and skills, who don’t have a definitive answer... something that’s inviting enough ... to different people.... I think it could work through a loose network... thirty to me sounds too big, maybe a core of ten to fifteen... [but also that would] do satellite stuff in the counties.” The last point echoes the comments of Onya and Siobhan. For her the key to the effectiveness of follow-up work is that it would “be really practical.”

4.7.6 The need for on-going contact with other RDWs is important for Jane. It is a solution “to a strange sense of isolation... why is it we all want to get together... there has to be some glue.” Networking would require a clear outcome focus for Mark. If that can be achieved, he would be interested. He would welcome any future initiative going forward, it would have “my support behind it... anything I could do in that area I would.”

4.8 PERSPECTIVES ON VSAS

4.8.1 Andrea pointed out that her VSA experience suggests that the functional divisions within agencies, for example, between ‘marketing, human resources and policy’ may encourage the RDW to experience their VSA’s processing of their return as something of a ‘box-ticking exercise’, with responsibility for the RDW falling to human resources, insofar as it fits within any function. Plainly, for the VSA that function has the professional competence to support the RDW. For Andrea, who believes that work with VSAs may be an important part of the future initiative,

the agencies are “not necessarily connecting the dots.”

4.8.2 For her, VSAs have yet to acquire an understanding of the contribution RDWs may make to their work. While she recognises there is a need to avoid a follow-up initiative becoming immersed in opposition to VSAs, it will of necessity be, at times, critical as their claims to implement development education appropriately is an issue for debate. The basis of the dialogue with VSAs for her has to be a broadly shared understanding of development in the global South but should not become a device to sustain the VSA ‘brand’ in the highly competitive market for public support, both financial and other. For Andrea the engagement with VSAs should avoid the pitfall of co-option.

4.8.3 Mary found her VSA supportive while she worked in the global South and part of the arrangement with her was to commit to continuing work with the agency post-return, which in her case, involves supporting fundraising activities. For Siobhan an important contribution that a future initiative could make would be to promote Comhlámh’s current Code of Good Practice for Sending Organisations: “RDWs could lead that experience... [enabling INGOs to] make it our own.” Echoing Andrea’s ‘connecting the dots’, the added value of the future initiative could be “knitting together all the things that are underway.” The suggestion here is that a future initiative might help form the RDW network as an authoritative voice on what is appropriate practice, for example with regard to fundraising. The particular value of follow-up work for her would be to transcend INGOs’ “agendas.” Ian points out that VSAs have “a duty of care” for the RDWs and drawing on his own positive VSA experience suggests debriefing in the country of placement would help RDWs manage the ‘reverse culture shock’.

4.8.4 Martha considers there is an important role for the follow-up initiative in contributing to VSAs’ pre-departure training of RDWs through making use of “courses [that] are out there... that would provide them [with understanding] of global issues.” Like Siobhan, Martha believes Comhlámh’s current ‘Code of Practice’ provides a ‘good starting point’ for the work with VSAs. She cautions against adopting a hard-and-fast position on fundraising, as for her the future initiative should be “very careful in demonising fundraising... [which can be] an outcome of [a] good quality

[process].” One issue that is important for her, which a follow-up initiative could advance, is that of “sending agencies who are not sending agencies” that is, agencies that facilitate people to work overseas without providing them with any support.

4.8.5 Rita’s experience of VSA pre-departure was on the whole highly positive. Over a number of months, in total eight to nine weekends, she met with other volunteers with the VSA and “the experience was brilliant... [although] I don’t know that it was consistent [for all departing development workers]... questioning yourself why you are going.” In addition, she completed a two-week course delivered by the now defunct Agency for Personal Service Overseas (APSO).

4.8.6 Jane recalls how her VSA took up particular pension rights issues for an RDW she knows. She notes that it may be difficult for RDWs to make full use of the VSA debriefing. In her opinion, RDWs may feel inhibited in a discussion within a VSA debriefing. She echoes Andrea’s view that RDWs may feel there are important issues between them and their VSA. During a VSA debriefing, with regard to these issues, “they [RDWs] are less willing to share it” and recalls how she heard of one occasion when the VSA’s overseas area officer felt dissatisfaction that criticism was voiced during debriefing. Comparing the substantial one and a half days of VSA debriefing and the Comhlámh Coming Home Weekend, with regard to the latter she “felt a lot freer there... [There is] a need for neutrality for the debriefing.” Later in the interview, she notes that VSAs’ ethos may change and this may not be what RDWs find conducive to engagement through the agency’s activities. “I think [Proper Name UK INGO] is now very much a government agency... [with] a ‘civil service’ ethos.”

4.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FOLLOW-UP INITIATIVE

4.9.1 The implications of the material presented in this section are:

General Implications

1) Channels through which RDWs participate in its activities are ‘permanently open’, ie the design of the ways in which RDWs become participants in a particular programme facilitates them in relation to when is the ‘right time’ during ‘busy lives’. For some this is likely to be early after returning home, for others after they have resolved

employment issues, and for still others, perhaps long after they returned home. The point here is as much on the ethos of the future initiative as the mechanics of recruitment. We recommend the action plan



Ensure the ethos of the future initiative emphasises the flexibility of the ways in which RDWs may participate in its activities.

2) The follow-up initiative has a sub-regional form that facilitates those distant from Belfast (and Derry) to network with each other, possibly on an ad-hoc basis, so that engagement with the initiative is not limited to participation in core development education activities, which will likely occur in Belfast or Derry. This addresses the ‘distance’ issue for those living far from the two principal urban centres and the ‘risk of drifting’ issue for the early returnees. A form that adopted a county-based structure would appear to have merit. Information and Communications Technology offers numerous devices, which will facilitate communication among RDWs in particular counties (or whatever sub-regional unit is appropriate), and across the region as a whole.

Support Needs Implications

3) With regard to the early adaptation-to-home period, perhaps during the first year, some consideration should be given to the follow-up initiative including a ‘process-orientated’ support, which would not substitute for Comhlámh’s current offering, but which would complement it with a support process that had a more continuing form. One possibility would be for existing participating RDWs to offer, with appropriate training and safeguards, to volunteer as ‘buddies’ for new returnees. The principal function of the ‘buddy’ would be to maintain whatever form of contact (in-person, by phone or email) would ‘work’ for the new returnee which would provide an opportunity for the returnee to ‘off-load’ (on for example how they found the widespread apathy ‘difficult-to-take’) and for the ‘buddy’ to keep the returnee ‘in the loop’. We recommend the action plan:



Consider the ways in which the follow-up initiative’s existing RDWs may offer more continuing ‘buddy’ support for ‘new’ returnees.

4) In relation to counselling, there is some but limited scope for a new initiative to enhance Comhlámh’s existing support. The future initiative

could maintain a simple register of professional counsellors active in the North who wish to offer counselling, within Comhlámh's quality framework and cost parameters. The different qualification routes and professional associations in the two jurisdictions would suggest that there may be a useful role for the future initiative to fulfil. We recommend the action plan:



Q. Consider the practical ways in which the new initiative could augment Comhlámh's counselling support to Northern RDWs.

- 5) On professional development support there is limited scope for the follow-up initiative to enhance Comhlámh's current offering. Possibilities include: 'NI-proofing' Comhlámh's inputs to the Coming Home Weekend bearing on employment; maintaining an ad-hoc listing of the few employment opportunities in the development sector of which participating RDWs become aware; and, similarly, maintaining a listing of professional training which they come across.

Development Education Implications

- 6) There is considerable scope for the follow-up initiative to advance the engagement of RDWs in development education. The story-telling approach resonates with most of the RDWs whom we interviewed. Skilled facilitation will be important to ensure that the energy for the initiative is maintained but the more fundamental challenge will be two-fold: firstly, how to create a collective narrative that is relevant to development education beyond the participating RDWs; and secondly, how this narrative is to remain current and 'fresh' as (hopefully) new cohorts of RDWs join the dialogue year-on-year. One way that the generalisability of the RDWs' narrative to the sector's issues could be enhanced is through designing the (facilitation) process so that at the appropriate time, Comhlámh and CGE would become active participants. We have in mind that they would enable the RDWs to relate their (then) collective narrative to the sector's issues. At this point the goal is for the RDWs to 'connect the dots' between their narrative and the issues and for the sponsors to identify how this narrative could be used practically in development education practice. CGE and Comhlámh will wish to ensure that the narratives RDWs present, both relate to, and are coherent with, development education perspectives, rather than, for example, relaying purely personal experiences of working in the global South. We recommend the action plan:



R. Adopt a collective story-telling approach to elicit from RDWs what their substantive contribution to development education is and that CGE and Comhlámh facilitate the integration of this narrative with, where appropriate, their existing development education activities.

- 7) Turing to the second issue, the maintenance of the 'freshness' of the narrative for 'new' RDWs, this is central to the sustainability of the follow-up initiative, for it is through the energy of these RDWs that the process will proceed, becoming less an initiative in the sector and more an asset for it. We note also that sectoral concerns will change as well. One way that this could be addressed is through maintaining the record of the narrative in a timeline with new RDWs adding their perspectives to earlier iterations of the narrative. The idea here is to avoid the creation of new narratives specific to particular cohorts and rather to create an historically unfolding narrative that resonates with the personal experiences of the different cohorts of participating RDWs. Technically, the 'dialogue-mapping' approach may be useful here and a software device is available that would facilitate this (Compendium). We recommend the action plan:



S. Anticipate an appropriate method, for example, dialogue mapping that ensures 'new' RDWs narratives may refresh the collective narrative of Northern RDWs.

- 8) All but one of those whom we interviewed pointed to civil society as the core audience for the development education practice that should be the result of their engagement. There is scope for the follow-up initiative to contribute to development education in the formal sector, which is of course part of civil society. One may reasonably expect such opportunities to be explored through the sponsors' participation in the collective narrative process and, where appropriate, action to follow. The informal sector, especially community- and faith-based organisations, resonates with many of our interviewees and others referred to the more formal mainstream of 'third sector', the extensive infrastructure of voluntary organisations operating in the region. In our opinion, the informal sector provides a large opportunity for the follow-up initiative to engage new, additional audiences with development education and could equip them with the requisite skills and resources. This will not appeal to all RDWs – especially not those whose

'day-job' is perhaps similar, but it appears it would have some attraction for others. We anticipate this would be delivered through unpaid work by (some) RDWs delivering short, mostly one-off, inputs to CBOs and FBOs and, as appropriate identifying ways in which the audiences may engage further in more in-depth development education. We recommend the action plan:



T. Consider the ways in which the follow-up initiative may engage new audiences for development education in community- and faith-based organisations through offering one-off inputs to these as informal introductions to global justice issues.

Implication for Campaigning

- 9) There is considerable interest in campaigning and some of the RDWs have tried to pursue this through ad-hoc activities while a couple are fully engaged in more systematic approaches. It will be important for any campaigning efforts that the follow-up initiative connects interested RDWs to other campaigns underway through existing sectoral efforts. However the skill-set that effective campaigning requires may form part of the training on offer to participating RDWs. Apart from the desirability of building capacity in this, such training would ensure that there is a return for these RDWs' investment of time. We recommend the action plan:



U. Offer to interested RDWs training in systematic approaches to campaigning on global justice.

Implication for Networking

- 10) Facilitating the formation and functioning of a network of RDWs will be important for the follow-up initiative as it is through the regular exchanges within the network that participants will be kept aware of the different strands of activity, maintain interest in it and identify as and when there are opportunities that will 'work' for them. There is some, but only limited, interest in the sociability benefits, although it will be sensible for the future initiative to attend to these, especially should new cohorts become attracted to it, as companionship will facilitate their connection. The strategic importance of the networking dimension of the future initiative lies in creating points of contact between it and other domains of activity (community, faith, work, trade unions, politics) in which RDWs operate themselves or to which they are connected by others (family, friends,

colleagues). The form of networking that our sources prefer, tend to be informal and emphasise practical goals. ICT will be relevant to the efficiency of such networking. We recommend that the action plan:



V. Consider the ways in which the future initiative could facilitate informal networking between RDWs that will extend the influence of the initiative into other domains in which the RDWs are active.

Implications for Working with VSAs

- 11) There is considerable interest among these RDWs in developing a strand of work with VSAs. It will be important that this is a constructive dialogue, as it is only through this that that the future initiative will influence the 'sending' practices to enhance RDWs experience overseas and, consequently, improve the VSA's effectiveness. Compliance with Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice for Sending Organisations provides a useful starting point for the dialogue on VSA practice issues. In terms of the benefits for VSAs, some of the RDWs are interested in providing inputs into pre-departure training. It seems reasonable to expect some level of take-up of this, perhaps especially among less well-resourced 'sending' FBOs. We recommend that the action plan:



W. Prioritise the inputs that the future initiative is to make to VSAs on agencies with fewer resources.

- 12) The other issue we note concerns the development education that VSAs may carry out here, what they mean by it, what it implies about development, what messages it conveys to people here – all of it providing real substance for debate. A long-term aim for the future initiative is that it become an authoritative voice for Northern RDWs and it will be important that it gives voice to legitimate concerns about (some) VSAs' development education practice. However for the dialogue with VSAs to aid the construction of a 'better' development education discourse, one that resonates more fully with the RDWs' collective narrative, a relationship of mutual trust between the future initiative and agencies is required. In our view, creating this relationship is the priority for the early period of this strand of work. We recommend that the action plan:



X. Encourage the formation of relationships characterised by mutual trust between the future initiative and VSAs.

5 CONCLUSIONS ON ADVANCING ENGAGEMENT

The research has mapped the quantity and quality of the ways in which VSAs support the engagement of RDWs with global justice issues, has described the manner in which Northern RDWs currently engage with development education and has explored the contextual and motivational orientation that both constrains and guides RDWs' actions. The report demonstrates that the future initiative could add value to the sector's existing offering through: first and foremost, drawing 'new' RDWs into the sector to give voice to their own commitment to global justice; secondly, complementing VSAs' and Comhlámh's existing support for RDWs; thirdly, providing an innovative approach to engagement in which RDWs' own narratives of development work are made a collective resource for the wider sector; and fourthly extending the sector's reach into civil society.

This is a significant opportunity for CGE and Comhlámh and the challenge is considerable. We leave to one side the difficulty of securing funding and the logistical issues that arise. A more fundamental challenge flows from the issue of managing strategically the constructive tension that may arise from the participation of RDWs as strong-minded participants and the imperatives that come with organisational positions, relationships and reputations in the sector. CGE and Comhlámh will wish to consider carefully how they will manage this tension.

With regard to relationships, for the future initiative to deliver all (or even most) of its promise, it will wish to initiate appropriate connections with other related initiatives. We have described in detail the content of the relationships it will wish to foster with VSAs. Of course, other agencies are relevant as well, including UK-based VSAs, academic centres, for example, the Development Studies Centre in Kimmage, Dublin and the Rapid Response Register training it hosts, and those 'non-traditional' agencies that develop different forms of voluntary development work in the global South. The implications of these 'non-traditional' agencies' work for development education and the engagement of these volunteers are an important subject for subsequent academic and applied research. We recommend:



Y. CGE and Comhlámh prepare an outline of a future initiative and, following the endorsement of RDWs, secure funding for it.

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ENDNOTES

- i COUNCIL DECISION of 27 November 2009 (2010/37/EC)
- ii Irish Aid (2007), Strategy Plan 2007–2011, Promoting public engagement for development, p 6.
- iii Review of DFID's Work to Build Support for Development through work with Businesses, Trades Unions, Faith Communities, Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, and Diaspora Groups, Final Report July 2009, Paul Thornton and Shaun Hext, Verulam Associates Ltd.
- iv GHK, 2010, Study on Volunteering in the European Union Country Report Ireland, London while the review on the UK is similarly perfunctory (GHK, 2010, Study on Volunteering in the European Union Country Report United Kingdom, London).
- v Donoghue, F, Prizeman, G, O'Regan, A, and Noël, V, 2006, The Hidden Landscape First Forays into Mapping Nonprofit Organisations in Ireland, TCD, Dublin.
- vi Comhlámh, 2009, Research into Barriers to Continuous Engagement as Experienced by Returned Volunteers and Returned Development Workers, Dublin.
- vii Dóchas, 2007, Volunteering for Development Paper, Dublin.
- viii MacRory, L, 2010, Towards Understanding How to Engage Returned Volunteers: Management Recommendations for VSO Ireland, MA Thesis, DCU, Dublin.
- ix Kelly, S and Case, R, 2007, Centre for Research and Education in Human Services The Overseas Experience: A Passport to Improved Volunteerism A Research Report, Imagine Canada, Toronto.
- x RDW and VSA Questionnaires are available from the Centre for Global Education (we prefer not to include them in the report to save carbon).
- xi We supplied the names of those we interviewed to CGE and Comhlámh, these names are not included in this report for reason of confidentiality.
- xii We note that a (broadly) comparable research exercise secured a markedly lower number of responses (13) from a much larger (than CADA) Development Education Association membership list, see PWC, 2009, Review of DFID's work to Build Support for Development through the Education System p 7.
- xiii Viatores Christi
- xiv Names used in the text are anonymised.
- xv The Northern Comhlámh project refers to an initiative that sought to bring together RDWs across the region which was advanced in large measure through the effort of George Dunwoody. The project achieved considerable success based on the voluntary input of the participants. The project lasted for two to three years and came to an end around 2005.
- xvi <http://compendium.open.ac.uk/institute/>