Evaluation of the Caritas Volunteer Deployment programme

FINAL REPORT

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EU Aid Volunteers
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1 Summary/Zusammenfassung

1.1 Summary

In summer 2019 Caritas Austria commissioned an evaluation of the outcomes and impacts of volunteer deployment with a special view on the changes brought about for host organisations and host communities (ie, communities or neighbourhoods where the volunteers work). Its main purpose was to support the learning of Caritas Austria and the host organisations and to provide recommendations for future volunteer deployment programmes.

The focus of the evaluation was on ten sites/organisations of volunteer deployment in the following eight countries: Bolivia, Cambodia, Colombia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Mexico, Mozambique, Thailand and Zambia.

For the evaluation both primary and secondary data were analysed. The methods used encompassed an analysis of existing research literature, a review of a random sample of reports from volunteers, a standardized survey of all host organisations and 13 qualitative interviews via Skype, telephone or WhatsApp with staff from host organisations and members of the host communities in Mexico, Mozambique and Thailand. In addition, eight on-site interviews were conducted in Mozambique which served as a case study.

The evaluation identified two main factors which are decisive for the occurrence of outcomes/ impacts on host communities: the "activities of volunteers (i.e. tasks for the host organisation) and their behaviour" and the "expectations and perceptions of the local population". Both influence the volunteers' ability to really immerse themselves in the local culture which is a pre-condition to bring about changes for local people.

Since the work of Austrian volunteers focus mostly on child care and administrative tasks for the host organisations, there are hardly outcomes/ impacts for host community as a whole. Changes triggered by Austrian volunteers occur at the individual level and affect especially staff of the host organisations, the beneficiary children and members of the host family.

Host organisations benefitted amongst others from new pedagocial concepts and approaches introduced by volunteers. All organisations emphasised the fruitful exchange between volunteers and local staff, which promoted a better intercultural understanding.

The **impact on the children cared for by the volunteers** is even more obvious: they could not only improve at school, but the volunteers' interest in and appreciation of the local culture also strengthened their cultural identity and self-confidence.

Changes in the attitudes and perspectives of people outside the host organisations can be found especially where volunteers are accommodated with host families near their place of work. Here, too, a better mutual understanding can be considered the main outcome as well as increased language skills (English) of the family members.

This notwithstanding and despite a better intercultural understanding, no evidence for **a change in the classical asymmetrical relationship between the Europeans who help and local people who receive help** could be found. Irrespective of the fact that volunteers work unpaid, they occupy a much higher position in the social hierarchy than members of the host communities because of their European origin, their economic and educational background, partly also because of their skin colour.

Most important recommendations

- In order to learn more about the impacts of volunteer deployment, notably on community members outside the host organisations, it should be considered to **set up a monitoring system** to allow the regular collection of relevant data.
- A real immersion of volunteers into the local culture can be promoted by ensuring that volunteers live in the host communities, if possible with host families.
- To increase the benefit of the volunteers for the host organisations, the volunteers should not only receive a general preparation but they **should also be prepared specifically for the respective location by the host organisations.**
- In order to foster more equal relationships and address structural power imbalances, the **introduction of a South-North volunteer programme** could be considered.

1.2 Zusammenfassung

Im Sommer 2019 beauftragte Caritas Österreich eine Evaluierung der Wirkungen des Freiwilligeneinsatzes, mit besonderem Augenmerk auf die Veränderungen, die sich für die Partnerorganisationen und die Gastgemeinden (d. h. Lokalitäten – Gemeinden oder Stadtteile in denen Freiwillige tätig sind) ergeben. Zweck der Evaluation war es, das Lernen von Caritas Österreich und den Partnerorganisationen zu unterstützen und Empfehlungen für zukünftige Freiwilligeneinsatzprogramme zu formulieren.

Der Schwerpunkt der Evaluation lag auf zehn Standorten/Organisationen von Freiwilligeneinsätzen in den folgenden acht Ländern: Bolivien, Kambodscha, Kolumbien, Ecuador, Äthiopien, Mexiko, Mosambik, Thailand und Sambia.

Im Rahmen der Evaluation wurden sowohl Primär- als auch Sekundärdaten analysiert. Die angewandten Methoden umfassten eine Analyse der vorhandenen Forschungsliteratur, die Durchsicht einer Zufallsstichprobe von Berichten von Freiwilligen, eine standardisierte Umfrage bei allen Partnerorganisationen und 13 qualitative Interviews über Skype, Telefon oder WhatsApp mit MitarbeiterInnen von Partnerorganisation und Mitgliedern der Gastgemeinden in Mexiko, Mosambik und Thailand. Darüber hinaus wurden acht Vor-Ort-Interviews in Mosambik durchgeführt, das als Fallstudie diente.

Bei der Evaluation wurden zwei Hauptfaktoren ermittelt, die für das Auftreten von Wirkungen auf die Gastgemeinden entscheidend sind: die "Aktivitäten der Freiwilligen (d.h. Tätigkeiten für die Partnerorganisation) und ihr Verhalten" und die "Erwartungen und Wahrnehmungen der lokalen Bevölkerung". Beide beeinflussen die Fähigkeit der Freiwilligen, wirklich in die lokale Kultur einzutauchen, was eine Voraussetzung dafür ist, Veränderungen für die lokale Bevölkerung herbeizuführen.

Da die Aufgaben der österreichischen Freiwilligen hauptsächlich Kinderbetreuung und administrativen Tätigkeiten für die Partnerorganisationen umfassen, ließen sich kaum Auswirkungen auf die Gastgemeinden als Ganzes feststellen. Veränderungen, die durch österreichische Freiwillige ausgelöst wurden, fanden auf der individuellen Ebene statt und betrafen insbesondere das Personal der Partnerorganisationen, die betreuten Kinder und die Mitglieder der Gastfamilien.

Die **Partnerorganisationen** profitierten unter anderem von neuen pädagogischen Konzepten und Ansätzen, die von den Freiwilligen vorgestellt wurden. Alle Organisationen betonten den fruchtbaren Austausch zwischen den Freiwilligen und dem lokalen Personal, der ein besseres interkulturelles Verständnis förderte.

Die Wirkung auf **die von den Freiwilligen betreuten Kinder** war noch offensichtlicher: Letztere konnten sich nicht nur in der Schule verbessern, sondern das Interesse und die Wertschätzung der lokalen Kultur durch die Freiwilligen stärkte auch ihre kulturelle Identität und ihr Selbstbewusstsein.

Veränderungen in den Einstellungen und Perspektiven von Menschen außerhalb der Partnerorganisationen waren vor allem dort zu finden, wo die Freiwilligen bei Gastfamilien in der Nähe ihres Arbeitsplatzes untergebracht waren. Auch hier kann ein besseres gegenseitiges Verständnis als Hauptergebnis angesehen werden, ebenso wie verbesserte Sprachkenntnisse (Englisch) der Familienmitglieder.

Dessen ungeachtet und trotz eines verbesserten interkulturellen Verständnisses konnten insgesamt **keine Hinweise auf eine Veränderung der klassischen asymmetrischen Beziehung zwischen den EuropäerInnen, die helfen, und den Menschen vor Ort, die Hilfe erhalten**, gefunden werden. Zwar arbeiten die Freiwilligen unbezahlt, sie nehmen aber auf Grund ihrer europäischen Herkunft, ihres wirtschaftlichen und bildungsmäßigen Hintergrunds und teilweise auch aufgrund ihrer Hautfarbe eine viel höhere Position in der sozialen Hierarchie ein als die Mitglieder der Gastgemeinden.

Die wichtigsten Empfehlungen

- Um mehr über die Auswirkungen des Einsatzes von Freiwilligen insbesondere auf die Mitglieder der Gemeinden außerhalb der Partnerorganisationen zu erfahren, sollte in Betracht gezogen werden, ein Monitoringsystem einzurichten, das die regelmäßige Erhebung relevanter Daten ermöglicht.
- Ein wirkliches Eintauchen der Freiwilligen in die lokale Kultur könnte dadurch gefördert werden, dass sichergestellt wird, dass die Freiwilligen in den Gastgemeinden leben, wenn möglich in Gastfamilien.
- Um den Nutzen der Freiwilligen für die Partnerorganisationen zu erhöhen, sollten die Freiwilligen nicht nur eine allgemeine Vorbereitung erhalten, sondern von den Partnerorganisationen auch speziell auf den jeweiligen Standort vorbereitet werden.
- Zur Förderung gleichberechtigterer Beziehungen und zum Abbau der klassischen asymmetrischen Beziehung zwischen den EuropäerInnen und der lokalen Bevölkerung, könnte die Einführung eines Süd-Nord-Freiwilligenprogramms in Betracht gezogen werden.

2 Evaluation design

2.1 Background

Caritas Austria has a long history of volunteer management and deployment in Austria and other countries. Presently, volunteers are sent abroad as part of the International Volunteer Deployment Programme (IFE) and the EU Aid Volunteers Deployment project.

Both initiatives support the deployment of volunteers to host communities, where the volunteers actively contribute to the partner organisation's daily activities. Their tasks cover a wide range of areas including, amongst others, childcare, teaching, administrative work or IT support. It was against this background that Caritas Austria commissioned an evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of volunteer deployment with a special view on the changes brought about for host organisations and communities.

2.2 Objectives and purpose of the evaluation

The main purpose of the evaluation was to support the learning of Caritas Austria and the host organisations by increasing their knowledge about the outcomes and longer-term impacts of volunteer deployment.

It had the following objectives:

- To identify and assess outcomes and effects of volunteer deployment on host organisations as well as host communities.
- To assess if the expectations of the host organisations in terms of volunteers' personal and professional conduct are met and give recommendations on how Caritas Austria and host organisations can support volunteers in fulfilling their mission in line with the organisation's strategy and policy plans.
- To assess what (conscious or unconscious) image volunteers transmit during their deployment, i.e. how volunteers are being perceived by their host organisations and communities.

2.3 Evaluation approach and evaluation questions

The evaluation was conceived as a "goalfree evaluation". This evaluation approach seeks to observe and measure all actual outcomes, effects, or impacts, intended or unintended of an intervention without being cued to the program's intentions. It is exploratory and most suitable for evaluations focussing on generating new knowledge and learning.

The evaluation sought to answer the following evaluation questions:

EQ 1: What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended outcomes and longer-term impacts of the volunteer deployment as perceived by host organisations and host communities?

EQ 2: If any, which type of changes have volunteers initiated in host communities? How sustainable are these once the volunteer is gone?

EQ 3: Do volunteers contribute to the host organisation's development? If yes, how?

EQ 4: To what extent are volunteers able to fulfil the needs and expectations of host organisations in terms of skills, moral values and identification with their mission?

EQ 5: How satisfied are host organisations with the type of volunteers they host (age, professional skills, engagement, respect, etc.) and with their preparation?

EQ 6: How satisfied are host organisations with the duration of the volunteer deployment? Is the duration of the deployment perceived as sufficient for making a meaningful contribution in the host organisation and/or host community?

EQ 7: How do host organisations and communities perceive Caritas Austria's mission in international volunteer programmes?

2.4 Methodology

It was agreed with Caritas Austria/ IFG to focus the evaluation on ten sites/organisations of volunteer deployment in the following nine countries: **Bolivia:** Centro de Formación Granja Hogar in San Ignacio de Velasco, **Cambodia:** Kinderdorf in Tani, **Colombia:** Fundación Herlinda Moises in Cartagena, **Ecuador:** Pastoral Social in Cuenca and Child and youth centre SALEM in Mindo**, Ethiopia:** Catholic Secretariate in Meki, **Mexico:** Desarrollo Educativo Sueninos in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, **Mozambique:** Day-Care-Center in Impaputo, Massaca und Namaacha, **Thailand:** Mercy Center, **Zambia:** Twikatane Ndola Vocational Training Center in Ndola.

To answer the evaluation questions above the evaluation used a mixed-method design encompassing quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. This included

- a review of reports (Tätigkeitsberichte) from volunteers (random sample of 50 reports);
- the identification and analysis of scientific papers/ articles and studies/ evaluations of volunteer deployment (15 documents);
- a total of 21 qualitative (guided) interviews via Skype, telephone or WhatsApp or face-to-face (8 in Mozambique) with staff of the host organisations and members of the host communities in Mexico, Mozambique and Thailand;
- a standardized online survey in English, Spanish and Portuguese sent out to the relevant staff of all nine project sites (response rate appr. 30%, i.e. 8 completed questionnaires).

Due to challenges faced during data collection (see 2.5) the evaluation design had to be adapted. Since in Mexico and Thailand it was not possible to find members of the host community for interviews, the evaluation team decided to focus on Mozambique and use it as a case study. For this purpose, a local consultant was hired who conducted face-to-face interviews with community members and local authorities. Finally, a total of 15 interviews were conducted in Mozambique, including eight interviews on site.

Overall, the data basis can be considered as very good, especially if compared with other studies in this area which are often based on seven to ten interviews.

2.5 Limitations of the evaluation

Methodology

With the planned methodological approach, all primary data should be collected remotely, i.e. not on site. This was a compromise that had to be made due to the number of project sites on the one hand and the available financial resources on the other. It was well suited for identifying the effects of volunteer deployment on host organisations, but not ideal for identifying the effects on host communities. For the latter, on site visits would have been the appropriate approach.

Technological constraints

The evaluation team had many challenges in reaching the interview partners and in keeping a stable phone, whatsapp or skype connection during the interview.

Limited number of Austrian volunteers

The evaluation focused on Austrian volunteers, but in fact most host organisations employ volunteers from many different countries. And in the host communities there are usually several organisations employing volunteers. From 1.1.2017 to 31.8.2019, a total of 17 Austrian volunteers were employed in the projects with which interviews were conducted (Mexico: 8, Thailand: 5, Mozambique:4). This made it very difficult for interview partners from host communities to make specific statements about Austrians. Also, because volunteers in Massaca (Mozambique) do not live in the same community, but in Namaacha.

Timing

The evaluation started in September 2019 with the literature review and it was planned that interviews would be conducted in October and the online survey in November. However, as the interview arrangements took longer than expected, the survey could only be conducted in the pre-Christmas period. This might have been one factor that influenced the survey response rate.

Survey response rate

Out of 27 questionnaires sent out, eight were answered. This corresponds to a response rate of 30%, which is slightly above the average for online surveys. This notwithstanding, the answers of only eight respondents can only be regarded as anecdotal evidence - a valid statistical analysis is not possible[1].

[1] In statistics, as a rule an N of at least 25 is required to run statistical tests and an N of at least 15 to use statistical key figures/ indicators such as mean value, standard deviation, etc.

3 Findings from the literature

3.1 General findings on the effects of IVS

The literature on the effects/outcomes/impact of international volunteer service (IVS) on host organisations and host communities (including direct beneficiaries of volunteer service) is relatively scarce. Most research and evaluations focus on the outcomes of IVS on European or American volunteers once they return to their home countries. The latter were not included into the literature review as not part of this evaluation.

The literature available shows mixed and controversial views on IVS. Researchers agree that general conclusions about the outcomes and impacts of IVS are difficult due to the variety of international IVS programmes, the local contexts and the volunteers themselves.

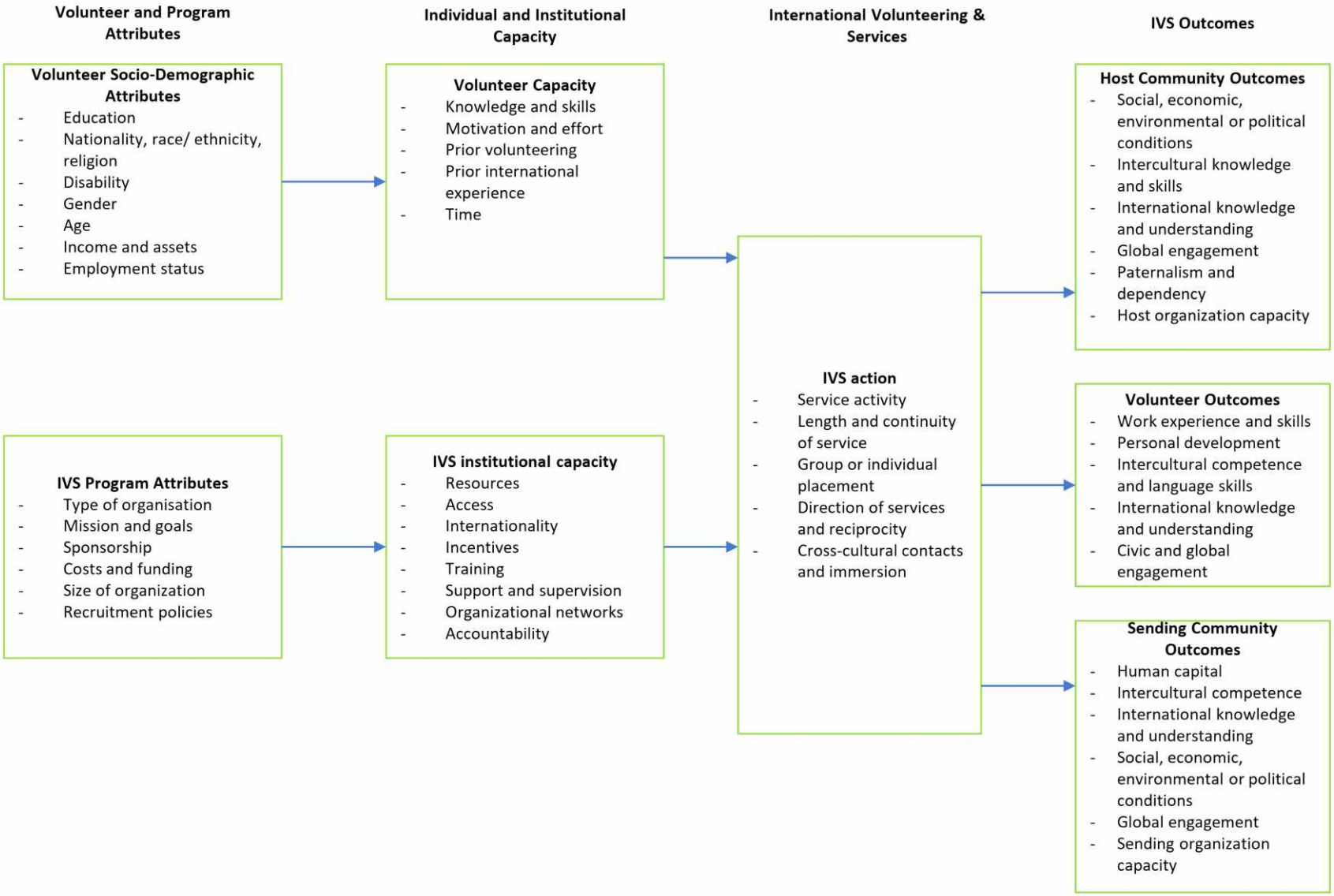
What do we understand by International Volunteer Service (IVS)?

"IVS is an organized period of engagement and contribution to society by volunteers who work across an international border, in another country, or countries. IVS may be sponsored by public or private organizations, it is recognized and valued by society, and volunteers receive little or no monetary compensation." (Sherraden et al 2008, p. 397-398)

There is, however, some common understanding that certain key factors of IVS contribute to its impacts, such as for example type and set-up of the program as regards the type of service activity, length and continuity of service, group or individual settings, and the direction of service (North-South, South-South, or also South-North). Also, the characteristics of the individual volunteers plays a role (e.g. home country, social background, knowledge, skills, motivation, age, etc.) as does the capacity of both the sending organisation as well as of the host organisation. However, the weight of each single factor, causal relationships between them as well as necessary conditions for positive impact and effectiveness of IVS are unclear.

In an attempt to systematize respective research findings, Sherraden (Sherraden et al 2008) created a conceptual model of IVS which is shown below. It distinguishes between "Volunteer and Program Attributes", "Individual and Institutional Capacity", "International Volunteering & Services (i.e. the IVS programs) and "IVS Outcomes".

Diagram 1: Conceptual model: international volunteering and service impacts (Sherraden et al 2008, p.397)



It should, however, be noted that the diagram does not show any causal relationships (even if the title of the article and the arrows in the diagram suggests it), but only undefined relationships. This is probably due to two main reasons: firstly, the model is a generic model that tries to cover all types of IVS. Secondly, the studies in this area are usually qualitative research, which is why there are hardly any established correlations between the various factors[2].

This might be one reason why Graham et al (2011, p. 3) – based on an extensive literature review and data from a survey of 61 sending organisations carried out by VOSESA (2010) –

"…argue that although international voluntary service has yielded some benefits for host organisations and/or host communities, it has had far less impact on the long-term development of host organisations and/or communities."

Lough (2008) brings forward a similar argumentation: "There is little strong evidence regarding the impact of IVS on intended beneficiaries" (cited by Kerrigan 2012, p. 19).

Sherraden et al (2008) argue that the outcomes on host communities, volunteers, and sending communities depend on "how institutions structure and leverage individual capacity" (abstract page 395). They claim that IVS – like traditional development aid - can even contribute to (existing and new) inequalities, if not deliberately addressed "through appropriate training, selection, sustained joint partnerships and field coordination, and accountability […]" (Sherraden et al, p. 407).

IVS seem to be more effective when it "reflects community priorities and involves community residents and leaders in projects and decision-making" and where "mutual learning and reciprocity in skill sharing" is encouraged (Sherraden et al, p. 403). Insufficient language skills and the lack of experience and specific skills constitute some of the barriers to significant IVS contribution. Group placements generally reduce the possibility of cultural immersion (Kerrigan 2012; Sherraden et al 2008).

The importance of cultural immersion or embeddedness is also emphasized by Lewis (2014) who states: "In general, volunteers perceived it to be easier to become embedded in settings where they lived very near to their place of work and/or in smaller communities where they had a very visible presence. In contrast, international volunteers who lived in larger cities such as Nairobi and/or had to commute significant distances to their placements faced added challenges in becoming embedded…" (Lewis 2014, p. 20).

In the following sections, we will look at outcomes on host organisations, host communities, and on final beneficiaries (ie people served by the volunteers) as well as factors influencing the sustainability of volunteer contributions.

3.2 IVS and host organisations

Volunteers with specific skills seem to be more useful for host organisations than unskilled (often still at high-school age) volunteers. Some organisations employ white people to increase their trustworthiness in the local population, and, to communicate to local people. There is still a widespread perception that white people are more skilled and advanced than local people (Graham et al 2011). But poorly prepared and skilled volunteers "could also diminish the host organisation's capacity to deliver service and potentially threaten its reputation with local residents" (Sherraden et al 2008, p. 408). To be able to place volunteers well and support them to integrate fast also host organisations need to be prepared for this

[2] An exception to this is outcomes for volunteers, which were collected through standardised surveys. However, these were not the subject of the evaluation.

task, especially by having detailed information of the volunteer's profile before the beginning of the volunteer's service.

Several researchers concluded that volunteers contribute to the resource mobilisation of host organisations and to the strengthening of their social capital (Graham et al 2011; Sherraden et al 2008; Kerrigan 2012; Lielbarde 2015). Lielbarde (2015) and Bliem (2019) found evidence that host organisations appreciate to get additional staff with different perspectives, ideas, and skills.

3.4 IVS, host communities, and beneficiaries

Kerrigan (2012) in her study on the effects of American young volunteers in Fiji found out that the habit of bringing gifts and money to host communities increased their expectations and reduced the engagement of locals for their own community. We find similar results in Lielbarde's (2015) study of the local community's perception of international volunteering in Kibera Slum in Nairobi. Locals reported their expectation that all white people are rich, distribute money to everyone, and find a solution to all their problems which in turn reduced their own motivation to get active to improve their livelihoods. Therefore, we find evidence in the literature that volunteer service potentially contributes to the dependency of host communities on foreigners, especially if the focus is more on aid than explicitly on intercultural learning (Sherraden 2008, Kerrigan 2012).

The 'westernisation' of values and behaviour seem to be seen negatively especially by more elderly community members and perpetuate Western hegemony (Lielbarde 2015, Sherraden 2008). On the other hand, positive outcomes of IVS reported by researchers include increased language skills and school performance of local community members and children, capital accumulation, cultural exchange and greater awareness of global inequality (Kerrigan 2012, Lielbarde 2015, Sherraden 2008, Graham et al 2011). In order to increase the intercultural learning of community members and international volunteers some researchers suggest a more structured dialogue and opportunities for reflection on prevailing power imbalances between North and South (Kerrigan 2012, Lielbarde 2015). There is some evidence that community members learn to value volunteering and solidarity with the presence of volunteers in their community as they appreciate volunteers coming to support them without being paid (Lielbarde 2015).

3.5 Factors contributing to the sustainability of IVS

Organisations often are not involved in the selection process of volunteers. Hence, they don't have the needed agency in the selection process, and, therefore don't get the volunteers they would need to make a difference. "…very often [they] end up hosting young volunteers who are newly out of school, who have limited skills to offer the organisation, and who have very little experience. (Graham et al 2011, p. 14). Often host organisations don't even know which type of volunteers they will be receiving undermining their ability to properly plan how to employ the volunteer to his/her full potential. This in turn contributes to the reinforcement of power imbalances between countries in the global South and in the North.

The findings of a number of researchers (Graham et al 2011, Bliem 2019) point to the fact that because of host organisation's role in shaping the experience of volunteers sending organisations should give them also an active role in the preparation and orientation of volunteers. If host organisations are more engaged in the selection and preparation this could have greater benefits as host organisations could better plan the placement to use the human resource strategically:

"Without a significant increase in host organisations' capacity to select the type of international volunteers the really need and to plan in advance how to make optimal use of

them, these international networks will produce some ad hoc benefits, but they will continually fail to deliver on their best potential (Graham et al 2011, p. 16)."

Researchers agree that if relationships between host and sending organisation are not to continue to be shaped by paternalism and power imbalances, a meaningful involvement of host organisation in the whole IVS process (selection, orientation, preparation) and the creation of an equal partnership is crucial (Graham et al 2011, Bliem 2019).

4 Findings from interviews and the standardized survey

4.1 General experiences with volunteers from Austria/ Europe

Almost all interviewees (both from organisations, host families as well as community stake holders) reported a positive experience with the Austrian volunteers. They underlined their good manners, respectfulness, flexibility, and responsible behaviour (e.g. regarding alcohol consumption). In the online survey, too, all respondents were of the opinion that Austrian volunteers show “very much” or “much” decent and respectful behaviour. Only in one case a host organisation was dissatisfied with a volunteer who did not take his/her service seriously but behaved as a tourist. Members of the host communities in Mozambique also appreciated the volunteers’ sense of initiative (e.g. support to build houses for poor community members).

Many interviewees expressed their satisfaction with the type of volunteers they received and with their level of preparation.

Almost all interview partners from host communities said that volunteers integrated very easily in the community. They are eager to learn quickly the language and adapt to the local culture. Volunteers eating local food, carrying out local tasks (like fetching water or washing cloth by hand) are particularly appreciated. However, a few hosts also reported the challenge to feed the volunteers due to different eating practices (e.g. vegetarian).

Only a few interviewees from host organisations said that they would prefer more mature volunteers with specific skills/professions to share.

4.2. Factors influencing the outcomes of volunteer work

All interview partners considered a good integration of volunteers in both the host organisation as well as the host community as crucial for successful volunteer work. A good and fast integration depends mostly on the individual background and the personality of the volunteer. In this context, age seems to play a minor role than personal maturity the importance of which was emphasized by all interview partners. Also, survey respondents perceive this feature as one of the most important.

Open mindedness, a good language level and a good understanding of the local context were also among the most cited factors for a good integration.

With regard to the last two factors, however, the biggest discrepancies between the expectations of the host organisations and the actual knowledge of volunteers were found. A few interview partners reported that sometimes volunteers lack a basic knowledge of the country’s historical/ political context or overestimate their language skills. Survey respondents also perceived the language skills and knowledge of the local context as rather low.

4.3 Outcomes for host organisations

All representatives of host organisations expressed their satisfaction with the volunteers and the volunteer programme in general. The latter includes the type of volunteers they receive, the length of duration (although longer stays are preferred).

Hosting volunteers is seen as a win-win situation for all involved parties, the staff of the host organisation, the volunteers, and the final beneficiaries. With one exception, all respondents of the survey agreed that “Volunteers bring skills that local staff does not have” and five agreed that some of the concepts/ methods used by their organisation were introduced by volunteers. Host organisations appreciate volunteers because they dedicate time to children

that the regular staff does not have. The intercultural exchange with local staff, too, is considered an enrichment. One teacher reported that s/he learned new teaching techniques from the volunteers, in particular teaching with games.

Interview partners from host organisations appreciate the volunteers' sense of initiative. For example, did volunteers set up a library at a center for children that has become an important institution in the center. In another case a volunteer painted the refectory on his own initiative.

4.4 Outcomes for final beneficiaries

In all projects for which interviews were conducted, volunteers mostly worked with children. The children, although not directly interviewed for this evaluation, seem to have benefited greatly from the volunteers. Through the support of volunteers, children learn new games or the creation of toys and improve their painting or other manual skills. Most of the interviewees reported the improved school performance of children as they get additional classes, homework assistance and additional learning materials by the volunteers. Volunteers help the children to improve their English language skills, in some cases also other subjects. It was mentioned by a few interview partners that children (and in some cases also parents) changed their attitudes towards education.

"Some children are now seeing education as an important tool for their future life as they were sensitised by the volunteer to not leave school on their earlier age." (Caretaker)

"We wish this help continues forever as it helps us also to change our children by showing them the importance of education and being away from negative habits like alcohol and early pregnancy." (Caretaker)

Some interview partners reported the increase of self-esteem induced by the volunteers' appreciation of the local culture. Children learn to value education, to value themselves and their own culture:

"I can also see that the other impact on children was that they learned to value and believe in themselves and their potential." (Teacher)

Volunteers are also considered as a sort of role model because they dedicate lifetime to serve in a poor community. They show their solidarity with poor people which is a value that seems to be less frequent in certain communities. Especially children benefit from the interaction with volunteers:

"In some cases [the volunteers] acted as a role model to inspire these children. The education they deliver to the children can be of a great influence in the future of these children." (Community leader)

The value put on education increased with the presence of volunteers. Many interview partners were convinced that the solidarity shown by volunteers towards them and other deprived people in the community will have a positive influence on the children in the long run. Children also learn to be open to other cultures and traditions. However, in this context it was also mentioned, that being foreigners who only take care of the children for a little while, volunteers cannot really make up for the lack of local role models. As emphasized by one interviewee, for a sustainable change of the children's' attitudes, perceptions and aspirations it would be very good to arrange regular contacts between deprived children/ youth with local people who "made it".

4.5 Outcomes on the social environment/host community

Volunteers supported deprived community members to build houses, brought clothes and food to them, hence, contributed to improve their livelihoods and wellbeing. This was very much appreciated by interview partners from host communities who agreed that this did not create any negative emotions or conflict within the community as all are aware that those people are poor and needy.

However, the perception of some host organisations is different. Interview partners regard such initiatives of volunteers as counterproductive because it increases the dependency of recipient families on external aid. The provision of cloth and food also creates difficulties for host organisations, because the beneficiaries do not recognize it as a “private” initiative of the volunteers but perceive it as support by the host organisation. For this reason, some organisations prohibit this kind of support.

Interviewed members of the communities also expressed their hope that hosting volunteers in the community might have positive outcomes on the local children and youth in the long run, ie locals get a sense of the importance of doing a service to poor people without getting paid.

“Hosting a volunteer is an added value for us in the community. We can learn a lot from them, and I believe the country benefits from their service […].” (Host)

4.6. Outcomes on host families

Children of host families benefit from the presence of volunteers as they learn new games. In many cases the whole family improves their English language skills, especially children, and get valuable insights into a European culture. Interview partners reported that hosting a volunteer has contributed to reduce their prejudices/stereotypes about European people. They experienced that these young Europeans are different (‘better’) from what they had learned in school about white people and colonialism. They appreciate a lot that young white people who could afford to spend their time otherwise, come to their country to help without getting paid. In general, interviewees reported to appreciate the possibility to learn from volunteers and to increase their social network. Host family interviewees expressed their gratitude of learning from volunteers.

“Receiving volunteers is a great leaning experience. What they do helps us to understand or learn that to help someone we do not need to look at the country of origin or the skin colour. Helping is a human thing; you just need to be human.” (Host)

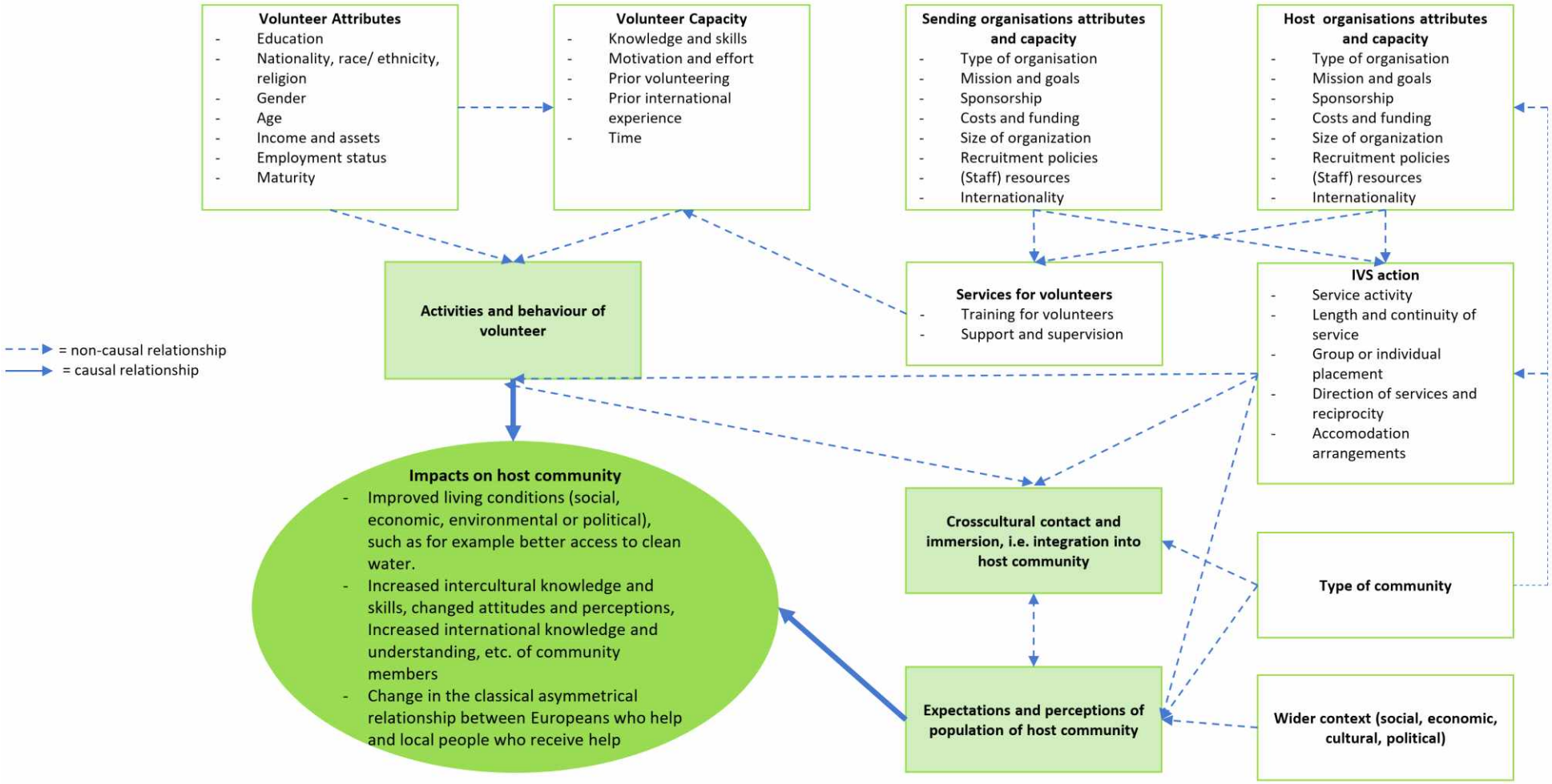
5 Conclusions

The conclusions presented in this section summarize the findings of the analysis of a random sample of volunteer reports as well as of research literature, 21 qualitative interviews and eight completed standardized questionnaires. Due to the number of interviews which is higher than in most of the existing studies on the outcomes of volunteer deployment, they can be considered as sufficiently robust despite the low number of questionnaires.

A review of the existing research literature and an analysis of the primary data collected by the evaluation suggest that in order to answer the evaluation questions for the international volunteer deployment programme, Sherraden et al's conceptual model has to be adapted.

The diagram below shows a respective proposal by the evaluation team, which includes some additional factors. In this model, too, there are hardly any causal relationships that would make it possible to predict certain outcomes.

Diagram 2: Factors influencing (positive and negative) impacts of the International Volunteer Programme of Caritas on host communities



As can be seen from the diagram, it is not so much the overall set-up of an IVS programme that determines the outcomes, but rather the cross-cultural contact between volunteers and the local population. It shapes the only two factors for which a causal relationship with the outcomes on host communities can be assumed: the "activities and behaviour of volunteers" and the "expectations and perceptions of the local population. “Activities" refers primarily to the tasks performed by the volunteers for the host organisation.

In "Impacts on host communities" we distinguish two types of outcomes: on the one hand, changes for the entire community ("Improved living conditions"), on the other hand, changes for individual members of the community.

We used this adapted model to integrate our findings from interviews and the survey and to draw conclusions for answering the evaluation questions.

EQ 1: What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended outcomes and longer-term impacts of the volunteer deployment as perceived by host organisations and host communities? and

EQ 2: If any, which type of changes have volunteers initiated in host communities? How sustainable are these once the volunteer is gone?

Changes in/improvements of the living conditions in the entire host community can be expected in three main constellations: firstly, when the volunteers carry out activities for which no one else is available, such as teaching, medical care or similar. Secondly, when their tasks are related to the improvement of the host communities' infrastructure, for example, if they help building a school. Thirdly, changes that affect the majority of the members of the host community can also be triggered by the organisation of events (e.g. health awareness raising sessions) at community level. Neither of these is the case in the projects examined.

However, all host organisations interviewed reported occasional private initiatives of the volunteers, such as providing food and clothing to needy families. While this is welcomed by the recipients, it is often prohibited by the host organisations, as it increases the families' dependence on outside help and might lead to conflicts with families who are not being supported. Since host organisations instruct the volunteers accordingly at the beginning of their deployment, initiatives like that hardly occur during their service. Some volunteers continue to send money to some families once back in Austria, and/or the come back from time to times to bring support.

Changes for individual people depend very much on the intensity of contact between volunteers and the local population. In the projects, this contact was mainly established with local staff and the children in the host organisations as well as with local people during spare time.

All organisations emphasised the fruitful exchange between volunteers and local staff, which promoted a better intercultural understanding. The impact on the children cared for by the volunteers is even more obvious: supported by the volunteers for example with their homework or studying for exams, the children taken care of by the host organisations could improve at school. Also, the volunteers’ interest in and appreciation of the local culture strengthened their cultural identity and self-confidence. With their willingness to work unpaid to help other people, the volunteers also act as role models in socio-cultural contexts where voluntary commitment of young people is not as common as in Europe. However, statements on the sustainability of these changes cannot be made within the framework of the evaluation, because it would require data from different points in time.

Changes in the attitudes and perspectives of people outside the host organisations can be found especially where volunteers are accommodated with host families near their place of work. Here, too, a better mutual understanding can be considered the main outcome as well as increased language skills (English) of the family members.

This notwithstanding and despite a better intercultural understanding, no evidence for **a change in the classical asymmetrical relationship between the Europeans who help and local people who receive help** could be found. Irrespective of the fact that volunteers work unpaid, they occupy a much higher position in the social hierarchy than members of the host communities because of their European origin, their economic and educational background, partly also because of their skin colour. Meetings at eye level take place, if at all, only with the staff of the host organisations.

Overall it can be concluded that the nature and extent of possible outcomes for the host communities – both positive and negative - are limited due to the characteristics of the Austrian volunteers, the format and set-up of the programme but also the low number of volunteers. Changes triggered by Austrian volunteers occur at the individual level and are usually restricted to the staff of the host organisations, the beneficiary children and members of the host family. All of the outcomes identified were perceived as positive by interview partners.

EQ 3: Do volunteers contribute to the host organisation's development? If yes, how?

The extent to which volunteers contribute to the development of host organisations depends primarily on their level of education, knowledge and skills. Volunteers who have completed vocational training or a BHS in the field of education, but also those with experience in childcare, are most useful to host organisations. They introduce the staff to new pedagogical approaches or didactic concepts, which are often integrated into the daily work. Other activities of the volunteers, highlighted by some host organisations, do not contribute so much to the development of the host organisations, but rather help to secure their existence. These include writing funding proposals during the stay or collecting donations after returning to Europe.

EQ 4: To what extent are volunteers able to fulfil the needs and expectations of host organisations in terms of skills, moral values and identification with their mission?
and
EQ 5: How satisfied are host organisations with the type of volunteers they host (age, professional skills, engagement, respect, etc.) and with their preparation?

Both the interviews with staff from host organisations and the questionnaires received in the survey show that, overall, the host organisations are very satisfied with the volunteers. In particular, their impeccable behaviour, their willingness to respect local manners and rules and their commitment to work are praised - to follow rules and to respect local communities.

Volunteers least meet the expectations of the host organisations in terms of language skills and knowledge of the local context, which is why Sueninos in Mexico, for example, prepares the volunteers in its own workshops.

EQ 6: How satisfied are host organisations with the duration of the volunteer deployment? Is the duration of the deployment perceived as sufficient for making a meaningful contribution in the host organisation and/or host community?

Stays of only three months are generally considered to be too short, as the volunteers cannot really integrate themselves during this time. A stay of six months or longer guarantees

sufficient integration of the volunteers, but longer stays are generally preferred by the host organisations.

EQ 7: How do host organisations and communities perceive Caritas Austria's mission in international volunteer programmes?

Interviewees from host organisations reported that their understanding is that Caritas gives young people the opportunity to show their solidarity with people less well off than themselves. However, for people of the host communities it seems not to make a difference whether volunteers are from Caritas or any other organisation. They are not always aware that Caritas Austria is the sending organisation as they only know that some young people work for host organisation X in their community.

6 Recommendations

1. If one of the main objectives of the International Volunteer Employment programme of Caritas is to bring about sustainable changes in host communities through the use of volunteers, the **profile of the volunteers would need to be adapted** (older participants with a completed professional education) and they would have to perform tasks other than childcare support.

2. In order to identify any changes and to follow up on them, it should also be considered to **set up a monitoring system** to allow the regular collection of relevant data. Such a system can be kept very simple, such as asking a question about perceived changes that is answered by both the host organisation and the volunteers at the end of their stay.

3. In order to **deepen the contact with the local population** of the host communities, it should be ensured that volunteers live in the host communities, if possible with host families. In addition, encounters (other than bringing support) like discussions, roundtables, cooking classes, etc. could be organized with the explicit aim to familiarize volunteers with the every-day life of local people and their perceptions, attitudes and aspirations and to teach them local traditions. The goal of such activities would be the empowerment of locals and to change the asymmetric relationship between them and volunteers.

4. In order to increase the benefit of the volunteers for the host organisations, the volunteers should not only receive a general preparation, but **should be prepared specifically for the respective location**. The content of such workshops should be developed together with the host organisations, as well as the identification of suitable literature. Short videos made by volunteers during their placement could also facilitate the preparation.

5. **Host organisations should be encouraged to get in touch with potential volunteers (ideally via videocall) before they are deployed** to identify suitable candidates. The adequacy of language skills could also be tested in this context.

6. Caritas should also consider introducing a **South-North volunteer programme** in order to foster more equal relationships and address structural power imbalances.

7 Annexes

7.1 Literature

Bliem, Astrid (2019), „Was bleibt, nachdem sie gegangen sind?“ Nutzen und Wirkung des Einsatzes junger, deutscher Freiwilliger im Rahmen des entwicklungspolitischen Programms „weltwärts“ in Maputo. Unveröffentlichte Masterarbeit. Technische Universität Kaiserslautern.

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United Nations Volunteers (UNV) (ed.) (2017), 2016 Volunteer Survey Report, Bonn.

Volunteering Australia (ed.) (?), 2011 National Survey of Volunteering Issues

7.2 List of qualitative interviews

Country	Name	Organisation	Function	Date of interview	Type of interview
Mexico	Christian Szinicz	Sueninos	Former director	15.10.2019	Skype
Mexico	Alma SILVA	Sueninos	Former project lead	15.10.2019	Skype
Mexico	Ivonne VELASCO MONTOYA	Sueninos	Project lead	31.10.2019	Skype
Thailand	Jason YEO	Mercy Center	Coordinator of volunteers	06.11.2019	Skype
Thailand	Usanee JANNGEON	N/A	Former staff of MC	20.11.2019	WhatsApp
Thailand	Robert GIBB	N/A	Advisor to board of MC	30.11.2019	Skype
Mozambique	Sr. Madalena de Jesus MANHAUSSANE CPS	Irmas do Precioso Sangre (Impaputo)	Director Centro Girassol de Impaputo	11.11.2019	Whatsapp
Mozambique	Sr. Maria Paula KOSTLER CPS	Irmas do Precioso Sangre (Massaca)	Director Centro Luz de Massaca II	11.11.2019	Whatsapp
Mozambique	Sr. Odete Henrique MAHUMANE CPS	Irmas do Precioso Sangre (Maputo)	Pedagogical support (HQ)	11.11.2019	Whatsapp
Mozambique	Sr. Lisete Rita MAVELANE CPS	Irmas do Precioso Sangre (Namaacha)	Director Centro Esperanca de Namaacha	12.11.2019	Whatsapp
Mozambique	Dona Elisa	N/A	Host family Namaacha	14.11.2019	Whatsapp
Mozambique	Miguel Ramos	N/A	Host family, Maputo	16.11.2019	Whatsapp
Mozambique	Gonsalves Saide André	N/A	Host family Namaacha	6.12.2019	Face-to-face
Mozambique	Manuel Souzinho	N/A	Host family Namaacha	9.12.2019	Face-to-face
Mozambique	Adriano Sitoe	N/A	Community leader Impaputo	10.12.2019	Face-to-face
Mozambique	Herminia da Gloria	N/A	Cartetaker Massaca II	12.12.2019	Face-to-Face
Mozambique	Isabel Fernando	N/A	Cartetaker Massaca II	12.12.2019	Face-to-Face
Mozambique	Adélio Matsumbe	N/A	Community leader Massaca II	12.12.2019	Face-to-Face
Mozambique	Paulo Cuna	N/A	Host family Namaacha	16.12.2019	Face-to-Face
Mozambique	Almeida João	N/A	School Teacher at Centro	16.12.2019	Face-to-Face

			Esperança in Namaacha		
Mozambique	Tamara Rafael Timane	N/A	Cartetaker Impaputo	19.12.2019	Whatsapp

7.3 Interview guides

Interview guide for community members

During the last years quite a few volunteers from Caritas/Europe came to your community/neighbourhood to support X (include respective project). We would now like to learn about your experiences with them, or the experiences of people you know, for that matter.

Please be so kind and take some minutes to remember the volunteers you know or knew personally.

1. Can you tell me a little bit about them? Whom do you remember best? For what reasons?

(possible additional questions – not shared with interview partners in advance):

- How did you get to know them or know about them? - What was your first thought when you heard about young people from abroad coming to volunteer in your community? How did you like the idea? Which type of interaction did you have with them?

- Where did they come from? Why did they come? What did they do in your community/neighbourhood? Can you remember any initiatives they started/carried out in your community/neighbourhood? Are these still going on?

- Do you have the feeling that you benefitted from the contact? In which way? Did you learn from them? If yes, what? Did they learn from you? If yes, what?

- What did you particularly like/dislike about them? Why?

- Do you have the feeling that volunteers integrated well in the community/neighbourhood? If yes, can you give a concrete example?

How were their behaviour/skills/activities they carried out as you had imagined?

- Was your idea about them and about Europeans in general confirmed or did it change? Why? How?

2. In your view: Are the volunteers from Europe different from the young people in your community/neighbourhood? In which way?

3. Overall: Do you think that the presence of European volunteers in your community/neighbourhood has changed anything? If yes, what?

- For example: More information about the European culture, religion, learning new things, getting financial support…

4. Are you still in contact with any of the volunteers or do you know anybody else who is?

- If yes: Why? How?

5. If, in future, it would be up to you to select the European volunteers coming to your community/neighbourhood. How would you select them? What would be important?

Interview guide for host organisations

During the last years your organisation hosted volunteers from Caritas Austria.

Can you tell me a little bit about them, (their work in your organisation, their behaviour and skills, their life in the community/neighbourhood)? Whom do you remember best? For what reasons?

When you agreed with Caritas Austria to host young volunteers, what were your expectations? How did you expect your organisation to benefit from their work?

Overall: Do you think that the presence of European volunteers in your organisation and in your community has changed anything? If yes, what?

Were their behaviour/skills/activities they carried out as you had imagined? Was your idea about them and about young Europeans in general confirmed or did it change? Why? How?

Additional topics to cover (if not already mentioned during the interview):

- Respect (for people and culture)
- Behaviour (in the organisation, with team colleagues, superiors, community members)
- Language skills
- Technical competencies/support (adequacy)
- Social competencies (team, initiative, responsibility, adaptation,…)
- Behaviour in difficult situation, conflicts
- Leisure activities

7.4 Survey questionnaire

Dear partners of Caritas Austria and Internationale Freiwilligeneinsätze CÖ,

This survey is part of the evaluation of the Volunteers Deployment programme of Caritas Austria and Internationale Freiwilligeneinsätze CÖ.

It examines a number of issues related to your experiences with volunteers from Austria or Europe respectively.

Answering the survey only takes a few minutes. Please give your opinion and keep in mind that there are no “wrong” answers! The questionnaire is anonymous on its technical basis, and your answers will be treated in strict confidentiality according to the European rules of data protection.

All data will solely be used for the purposes of insight into improvement possibilities for the Volunteer Deployment Programme.

The evaluators (Anita Leutgeb and Katharina Demel) and Caritas Austria thank you very much for your time and effort!

(There are 6 questions in this survey.)

If you think of the local people living in the neighbourhood in which the Austrian volunteers work: Apart from volunteers, do local people have regular contact also with other foreigners?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

With what kind of foreigners are they in regular contact?

Please choose **all** that apply:

- ☐ Development workers and/or volunteers from your own or other Non-European countries
- ☐ Tourists
- ☐ (visiting) Donors/sponsors who support your organisation

In your view, how important is each of the following features for a good integration of a volunteer?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important
Personal maturity	○	○	○	○
Open mindedness	○	○	○	○
Commitment to work	○	○	○	○
Good knowledge of the local context	○	○	○	○
Good knowledge of the main language used in the organisation	○	○	○	○
Good knowledge of the main language used by local people	○	○	○	○
Decent and respectful behaviour	○	○	○	○
Willingness to stick to organisational rules	○	○	○	○
Readiness to follow advice regarding	○	○	○	○

	Very important	Important	Less important	Not important
adequate behaviour				

If you think of the Austrian volunteers you know or have known: On average, to what extent do/ did they show each of the following features?

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Very much	Much	Somewhat	Very little
Personal maturity	○	○	○	○
Open mindedness	○	○	○	○
Commitment to work	○	○	○	○
Good knowledge of the local context	○	○	○	○
Good knowledge of the main language used in the organisation	○	○	○	○
Good knowledge of the main language used by local people	○	○	○	○
Decent and respectful behaviour	○	○	○	○
Willingness to stick to organisational rules	○	○	○	○
Readiness to follow advice regarding adequate behaviour	○	○	○	○

Below you find some statements about volunteers. Please indicate how much you agree with each of them.

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Some of the concepts/methods we use in our organisation were introduced by a volunteer.	○	○	○	○
Volunteers bring skills that local staff does not have.	○	○	○	○
Volunteers help us to acquire additional funds for our organisation.	○	○	○	○

Below you find some additional statements about volunteers' behaviour. Please indicate how much you agree with each of them.

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Volunteers are eager to learn from local people.	○	○	○	○
Local people are eager to learn from volunteers.	○	○	○	○
Volunteers do not show enough respect to local culture and values.	○	○	○	○
Through the contact with volunteers local people enlarge their personal horizon.	○	○	○	○
Volunteers behave as if they were on holiday.	○	○	○	○
Volunteers are often arrogant	○	○	○	○

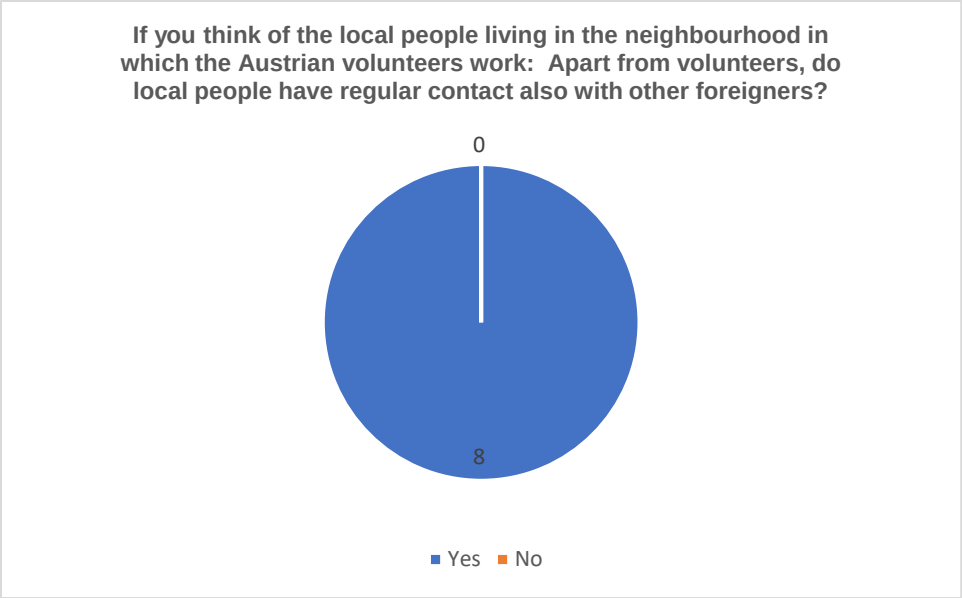
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
towards local people.				
Local shopkeepers benefit from the presence of volunteers.	○	○	○	○
Volunteers show off with the money they have.	○	○	○	○
By appreciating the local culture volunteers enhance the self-confidence of local people.	○	○	○	○
The presence of volunteers increases dissatisfaction among local people.	○	○	○	○

We thank you very much for sharing your opinion with us!

Anita Leutgeb (office@anitaleutgeb.at) and Katharina Demel (katharina.demel@chello.at)

7.5 Survey results

Number of responses: 8 (4 English questionnaires, 4 Spanish questionnaires)


If you think of the local people living in the neighbourhood in which the Austrian volunteers work: Apart from volunteers, do local people have regular contact also with other foreigners?
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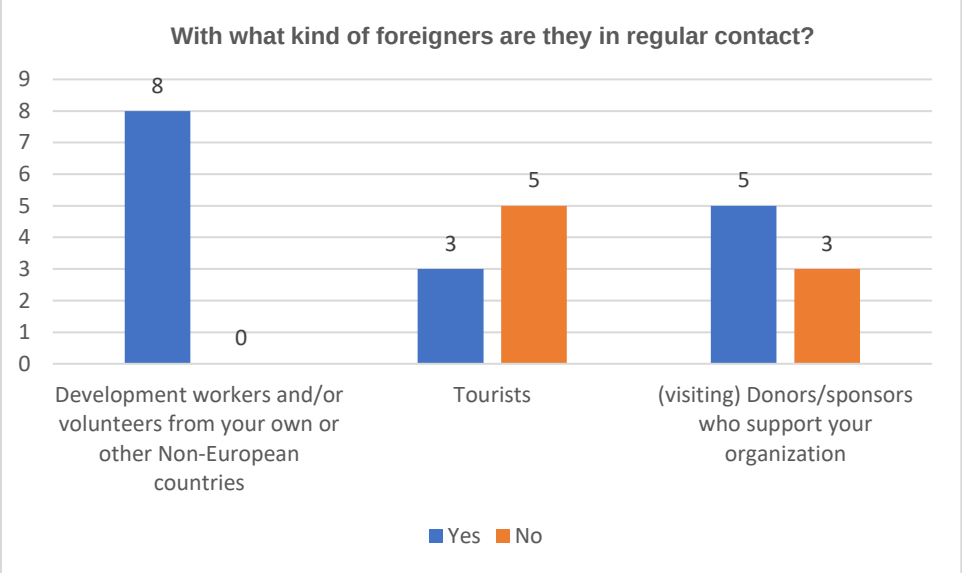
8
Yes
No


With what kind of foreigners are they in regular contact?
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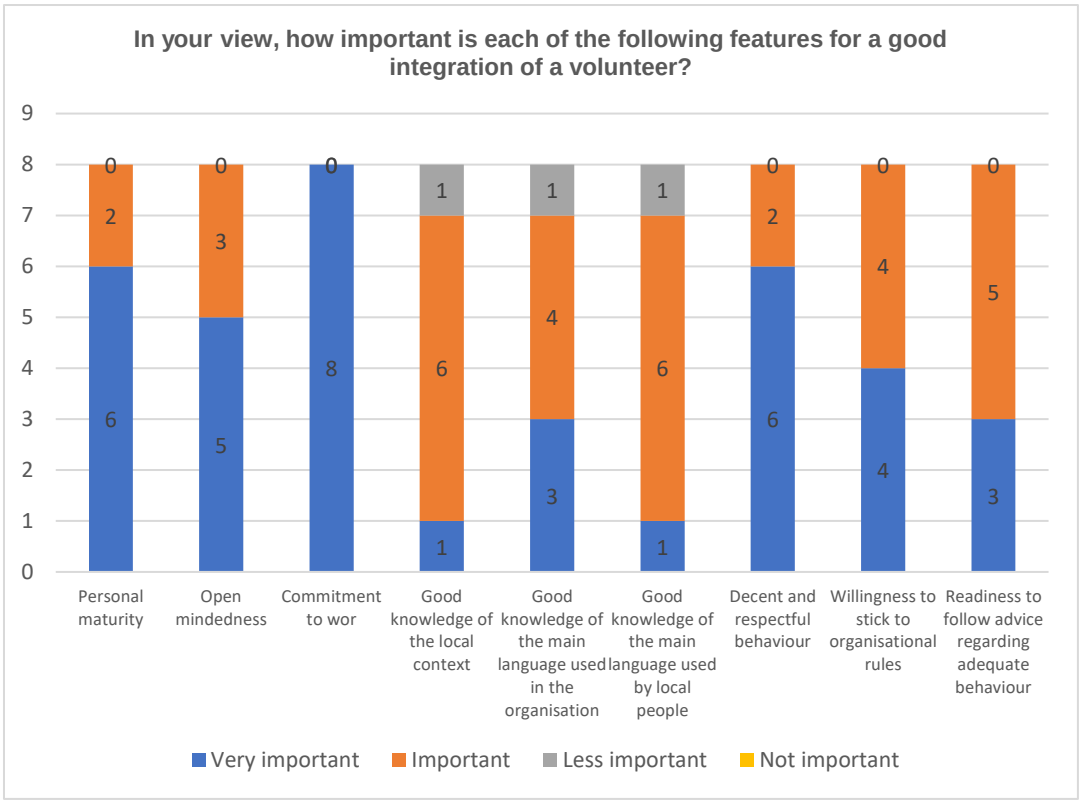
Development workers and/or volunteers from your own or other Non-European countries
Tourists
(visiting) Donors/sponsors who support your organization
Yes
No


In your view, how important is each of the following features for a good integration of a volunteer?
9
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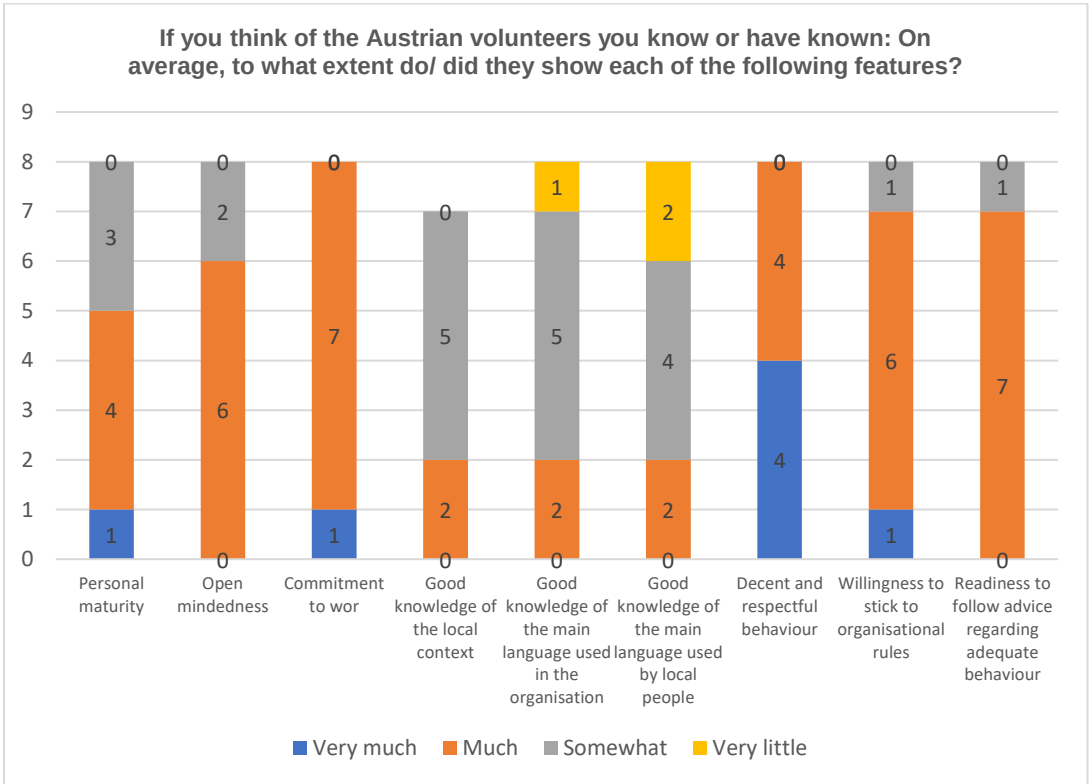
Personal maturity
Open mindedness
Commitment to wor
Good knowledge of the local context
Good knowledge of the main language used in the organisation
Good knowledge of the main language used by local people
Decent and respectful behaviour
Willingness to stick to organisational rules
Readiness to follow advice regarding adequate behaviour
Very important
Important
Less important
Not important


If you think of the Austrian volunteers you know or have known: On average, to what extent do/ did they show each of the following features?
9
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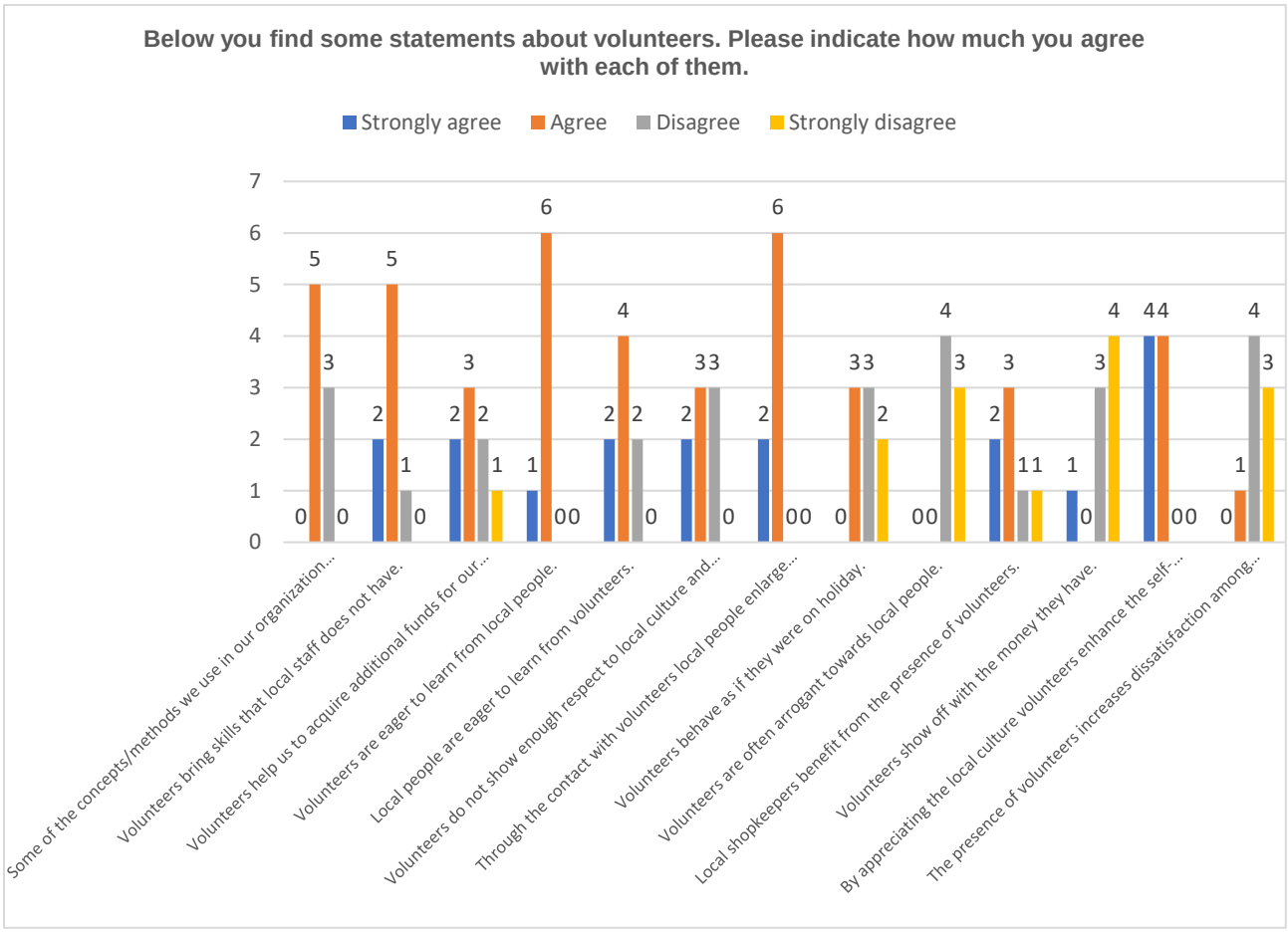
Personal maturity
Open mindedness
Commitment to wor
Good knowledge of the local context
Good knowledge of the main language used in the organisation
Good knowledge of the main language used by local people
Decent and respectful behaviour
Willingness to stick to organisational rules
Readiness to follow advice regarding adequate behaviour
Very much
Much
Somewhat
Very little



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