The Power of Volunteering

A Review of the Canadian Volunteer Cooperation Program

Evaluation Report

Final Report

March 2005

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Acknowledgments

A c r o n y m s

AFS IC	AFS Interculture Canada (formerly American Field Service)
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CC	Canada Corps
CD	Capacity Development
CCI	Canadian Crossroads International
CECI	Canadian Centre for International Studies and Cooperation
CESO	Canadian Executive Service Organization
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPB	Canadian Partnership Branch
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CUSO	Formerly Canadian University Service Overseas
CWY	Canada World Youth
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DC	Developing Country
DCO	Developing Country Organization
FAC	Foreign Affairs Canada
GE	Gender Equality
GoC	Government of Canada
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IYIP	International Youth Internship Program
KARs	Key Agency Results
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OCOD	Organization for Cooperation in Overseas Development
OCSD	Canadian Organization for Solidarity and Development
OD	Organizational Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PE	Public Engagement
PKMB	Performance and Knowledge Management Branch
PPR	Project Performance Report
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBAF	Risk-Based Audit Framework

A c r o n y m s

RBM	Results Based Management
RMAF	Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework
RV	Returned Volunteer
SAE	Strengthening Aid Effectiveness
SUCO	Solidarité, Union, Coopération
SWAp	Sector-wide approach
TBS	Treasury Board Secretariat
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VCA	Volunteer Cooperation Agency
VCP	Volunteer Cooperation Program
VICS	Volunteers International for Christian Service
VSO Canada	Voluntary Service Overseas – Canada
WUSC	World University Service of Canada
YES	Youth Engagement Strategy

Glossary of Terms

Term	Description	Source
Capacity Development	Capacity Development is the process whereby individuals, groups, organizations and societies in developing countries enhance their abilities to identify and meet development challenges in a sustainable manner.	CIDA
Cooperant	Used by some VCAs (e.g. CUSO) to refer to a volunteer	
Development Assistance Committee (DAC)	DAC is a committee of the OECD and a key forum of major bilateral donors. Donors work together to increase the effectiveness of their common efforts to support sustainable development. The DAC concentrates on two key areas: a) how international development cooperation contributes to the capacity of developing countries to participate in the global economy, and b) the capacity of people to overcome poverty and participate fully in their societies.	OECD web site
Domestic volunteering	Used by some VCAs (e.g. VSO) to refer to the development of volunteering capacity, often in developing countries.	
In-country volunteers	Used by some VCAs to refer to the placement of volunteers from one developing country to other venues in that same country (e.g. a placement of an urban Ghanaian in a rural setting in Ghana). Some organizations, (e.g. CUSO) use the term host-nationals instead.	
Global Citizen	A person who recognizes that he/she is part of a community belonging to one planet, who understands his/her stake in the well-being of the planet and its people, and who is prepared to take responsibility for his/her action at the local, regional, national or international level, in support of global sustainable development.	Canadian International Volunteer Coalition (CIVC), 2001
Institution	The formal and informal rules by which system actors interact. Institutions involve a range of areas such as normative structures, culture, legal frameworks, policies and trends.	International Development Research Centre/Inter-American Development Bank, Organizational Assessment, A Framework for Improving Performance, 2002.
International Volunteering	Refers primarily to international volunteer sending but also includes non-sending forms of international volunteering such as working in one's own country on global issues.	Canadian International Volunteer Coalition (CIVC), 2001

G l o s s a r y   o f   T e r m s

Term	Description	Source
Knowledge sharing	Refers to a situation where the two parties have important knowledge to share that is complementary and useful to the achievement of a common objective (as opposed to knowledge transfer, which refers to the transfer of knowledge from one party to another).	Canadian International Volunteer Coalition (CIVC), 2001
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	The MDGs are eight goals that all 191 UN member states have agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015.	OECD website
North	Used here to refer to developed countries	
North-South volunteers	Used by some VCAs to refer to the placement of volunteers from developed countries in developing countries.	
Organization	Formalized entities that involve a cluster of people who are brought together for a common purpose. Organizations both conform to and influence institutions. They include a wide spectrum of human activity and can be categorized as private or public, for profit or non-profit, governmental or nongovernmental, and so forth.	International Development Research Centre/Inter-American Development Bank, Organizational Assessment, A Framework for Improving Performance, 2002.
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	The OECD groups 30 member countries sharing a commitment to democratic development and the market economy. The OECD produces internationally agreed instruments, decisions and recommendations to promote rules of the game where multilateral agreement is necessary for individual countries to make progress in a globalized economy.	OECD web site
Program	A program is an integrated set of activities designed to achieve a related set of outcomes in a relatively comprehensive way.	CIDA, "Implementing Strengthening Aid Effectiveness Policy", Business Operations Group, March 2004
Sector	An area of focus such a health, education, manufacturing, households or business. Sectors are made up of institutions and organizations.	International Development Research Centre/Inter-American Development Bank, Organizational Assessment, A Framework for Improving Performance, 2002

G l o s s a r y   o f   T e r m s

Term	Description	Source
Social capital	Networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups.	OECD: The Well-being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 2001
South	Refers to developing countries	
South-South volunteer	Term used by some VCAs to refer to the placement of a volunteer from one developing country to work in another developing country	
Technical Assistance/ Cooperation	A means of filling gaps in technical capacity via the deployment of specialists, drawing on their professional expertise to undertake specific tasks. In some cases TA is used to strengthen local capacities but this is not always the case.	Volunteerism and Capacity Development, UN Volunteers (UNV), Bonn, 2002
Volunteer (International)	An individual who provides unpaid services for the purpose of contributing to global sustainable human development, often, but not always, while traveling to another country for this purpose.	Canadian International Volunteer Coalition (CIVC), 2001
Volunteer Cooperation	The use of volunteers in international cooperation work at home or in another country	Canadian International Volunteer Coalition (CIVC), 2001
Volunteer Cooperation Agencies (VCAs)	Refers to those non-governmental organizations that have specifically identified themselves as volunteer cooperation agencies. Such agencies are involved in both volunteer sending and receiving, in combination with development work, as a means to achieving specific development goals.	CIDA, Volunteer Cooperation Program
Volunteer Sending Agencies (VSAs)	Term used until 2004 by CIDA to describe those agencies that use volunteer sending as the main delivery mechanism of their contribution to international development.	CIDA, Volunteer Cooperation Program

C o n t e n t s

E x h i b i t s

Management Response

Introduction

Although CPB's Volunteer Cooperation Program is less than a year old, Treasury Board requested a program review "to assess the effectiveness of the volunteer cooperation contribution program" by March 31, 2005 as conditional approval of the 5-year agreements that CIDA signed with ten Volunteer Cooperation Agencies (VCAs). Prior to CPB's restructuring in April 2003, the VCAs were not managed programmatically. It is important to underline that this is not an evaluation of individual VCAs but a review of the Program to justify CIDA's decision for establishing a dedicated Volunteer Cooperation Program (VCP).

The ten VCAs are: AFS Interculture Canada; Canada World Youth; Canadian Crossroads International; Canadian Executive Service Organization; Centre canadien d'étude de cooperation internationale; CUSO; OXFAM-Québec; SUCO; Voluntary Service Overseas Canada; and World University Service of Canada.

In June 2004, CIDA's Performance and Knowledge Management Branch (PKMB) commissioned a consortium of consulting firms to undertake this review. In developing the overall approach and framework for this review, PKMB and CPB management consulted the VCAs and received the full collaboration of all the VCAs in the review which focuses principally on the last ten years. The overall synthesis report entitled *The Power of Volunteering: A Review of the Canadian Volunteer Cooperation Program* incorporates four sub-studies: Study on Context and CIDA Management; Study on Developing Country Organizations; Study on Public Engagement; and Study on Returned Volunteers. The review, carried out between June 2004 and March 2005, sought to identify the results achieved by volunteer cooperation, assess the effectiveness of this approach, and identify ways to improve performance.

The report concludes that the VCP is achieving significant development results in developing countries. In terms of impact in Canada, the report concludes that the VCP public engagement (PE) work is having a significant, if uneven, impact on Canadians' understanding of different cultures as well as their knowledge of development issues and support for international development programs. Finally, the report confirms that VCA programming is closely aligned with CIDA development priorities.

The report makes ten recommendations, three of which are specifically addressed to CIDA (CPB); three which are addressed jointly to CIDA and the VCAs, and; four to the VCAs specifically. These recommendations, which can be grouped into three clusters, propose the following: formal recognition of the contribution that volunteering makes to Canada's overall international development efforts; more strategic programming approaches and sharpened performance measurement frameworks for improved monitoring and reporting on results achieved; and, means to increase the effectiveness of the VCAs' public engagement programming.

Recommendations	Commitments / Actions	Responsibility Centre	Target Completion Date	Status
1. Develop a Statement on International Volunteering that clearly defines the purpose and expected results of CIDA's overall investments in international volunteer cooperation.	Agree. CPB will work with Canada Corps to jointly develop a Statement on International Volunteering to ensure a coherent policy on international volunteering. We will also consult our partners and relevant other Government Departments on the Statement. It could be pegged to December 5, International Day of the Volunteer. Once finalized, a communications plan will be developed and implemented that will allow for maximum exposure of the Statement, both internally and externally to CIDA.	*CPB and Canada Corps*	*December 5, 2005*	*To be initiated April 2005*
2. Develop strategic programmatic approaches to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate the Volunteer Cooperation Programs in its dynamic context.	Agree. This is already underway. ▪ **Needs assessment** - The management of the VCA portfolio is being undertaken in a more collaborative way than in the past, using administrative and management practices to ensure consistent application and transparency. This enables program staff to look at new practices supporting more strategic, focused programming approaches (to be pursued with other Branches who have used similar transformative approaches).	*CPB*	*September 2005*	*In progress*
	▪ **Monitoring the context** - This is ongoing and again reflects the efforts of CPB to undertake more collaborative management. The regular meetings of the VCA group with CPB on issues of common interest and concern allows for full transparency.	*CPB*	*Ongoing*	*In progress*

Recommendations	Commitments / Actions	Responsibility Centre	Target Completion Date	Status
	▪ **Longer-term planning horizons** - Planning for programming beyond 2009 should be helped by the mid-term evaluation process that is planned for 2006/07. Care must, however, be taken to ensure flexibility and adaptability to unanticipated events and an evolving environment.	CPB with VCAs	*April 2009*	*To be initiated in 2006-07*
	▪ **Portfolio management** - Efforts are already underway to revise the approach to "investment monitoring and reporting" with respect to results and impact (i.e. PKMB's Investment Monitoring and Reporting Tool or IMRT pilot project). The pilot phase of this initiative has involved three VCAs (CCI, VSO Canada and WUSC/CECI). This process provides common ground for the monitoring and evaluation of the Program. We will monitor the overall impact of the VCAs collectively through their selection of priorities, sectors and countries. The allocation of flexible program resources to reward performance and innovative programming by current and potential new partners will be determined by the availability of funds.	CPB	*September 2005*	*In progress*
3 a. Review and sharpen the existing program's logic and performance measurement frameworks in order to clarify, focus and distinguish cross-cutting volunteer cooperation program synergies from the sum of VCA results.	Agree ▪ **Frameworks :** We will work with PKMB on refining the existing Logic Model and performance measurement framework including indicators that are part of the Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF). A	CPB with PKMB support	March 2006	To be initiated in April 2005.

Recommendations	Commitments / Actions	Responsibility Centre	Target Completion Date	Status
	programmatic assessment of priorities, sectors and country programming and results will allow us to distinguish cross-cutting synergies.			
3 b. Consider removing organizations from the VCP portfolio whose program purposes are not congruent with VCP's primary purposes.	▪ **VCP Portfolio:** CPB is in the process of determining how we ensure some flexibility in accepting new partners. We shall review the status of CWY and AFS as well as other partners at this time.	CPB	September 2005	In progress
3 c. Clarify and streamline reporting requirements at program and sub-program levels.	▪ **Reporting:** We support this intention (demonstrated by the financial support given to CCI to develop an impact evaluation system that could be taken on board by the other VCAs as appropriate). The design of a standard contribution agreement for the VCAs, reporting requirements were examined and streamlined and explained to the VCAs. An example of this streamlining was the approach to allow the annual Program/Project Performance Report (PPR) to stand as the annual narrative report rather than prepare two documents. We will continue to regularly review reporting requirements, apply additional streamlining and avoid unnecessary duplication as appropriate. However, some of the reporting required is to meet Agency reporting obligations (e.g. data on technical assistance required for OECD-DAC). Decisions on the overall application of Program Activity Reporting System (PARS) are made at the corporate level rather than	CPB	December 2005	In progress

Recommendations	Commitments / Actions	Responsibility Centre	Target Completion Date	Status
	within the VCP. The proposed revision to the PPR format (i.e. the above noted IMRT process) is expected to allow partners to report at a more programmatic level based on Key Agency Results (KARs).			
4. Review and define how both CIDA and VCAs will track and report the costs and benefits of volunteer cooperation programming in the future.	Agree. The cost per VCA placement is neither a meaningful nor a complete measure of the value which volunteer cooperation programming brings to international development. While CIDA would certainly support any reasonable attempt on the part of VCAs to track and report on the relative costs and benefits of volunteer cooperation programming, the Agency recognizes that this would be an extremely difficult task, given the number of variables which would need to be taken into account. It should also be noted that CIDA funding allocations to volunteer cooperation agencies are based on the organization's track record, the quality of programming; and, on development results with developing country partners and on PE results in Canada, rather than on VCA cost/benefit analyses. The reporting of numbers of volunteers is one of several indicators and is useful information when reporting on the countries and sectors VCAs are focused on. CIDA is already asking VCAs to report on the funds they leverage, the unpaid time of their volunteers in Canada and in the South as other value-added indicators described in section 4.5.3 of the review.	CIDA and VCAs	March 2006	In progress

Recommendations	Commitments / Actions	Responsibility Centre	Target Completion Date	Status
5. Review the status and performance of VCAs' PE programs in one year to assess their overall effectiveness and areas for improvement.	Agree. We are working with VCAs and PKMB to develop indicators to measure performance. We will collaborate on joint PE initiatives as linked to the PE Strategy. For example, CIDA and VCAs have agreed to collaborate on a joint event on December 5, International Day of the Volunteer, to recognize the work of their Returned Volunteers.	CIDA and VCAs	December 2005	To be initiated in April 2005
6. Actively communicate and champion VCP more effectively through internal and external channels.	Agree ▪ We will propose the creation of a Returned Volunteer Award to be presented by the Minister on December 5, International Day of the Volunteer. Pending the Minister's approval, we will establish an Awards Committee and invite VCAs to nominate candidates. ▪ We will update our website in 2005 ▪ We have hosted brown bag lunches at CIDA (eg VSO Canada) publicized on Entre Nous. ▪ We will continue to invite some VCA representatives to high-profile consultations (examples from last year: Minister's conference call to partners on the federal	CIDA and VCAs	December 5, 2005 September 2005 for primary update; Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	In progress To be initiated in May 2005 In progress In progress

Recommendations	Commitments / Actions	Responsibility Centre	Target Completion Date	Status
	budget; Ministerial Roundtables; focus group meetings on Canada Corps; meeting with Kofi Annan)			
7. Continue to fine-tune Developing Country Organization programming approaches to enhance VCA effectiveness in providing capacity development support to developing country organizations.	Agree. CPB is working with VCAs to ensure the recommended measures are implemented as feasible and within their allocated funding.	VCAs	Ongoing	In progress
8. Continue to develop and refine PE strategies and programs.	Agree. CPB will discuss with the VCAs to see how to improve on PE programming with appropriate linkages to the PE Strategy.	VCAs	Ongoing	In progress
9. Explore if and how VCAs can work more cooperatively with other VCAs and Canadian representatives abroad.	Agree. CPB will offer pre-departure briefings for field deployments and to Field Rep. Forums on VCA programming.	VCAs	Ongoing	In progress
10. Review and revise existing logic frameworks and Performance Measurements Frameworks for the local capacity building and PE components to ensure that planned results are realistic and focused.	Agree. We will work with the VCAs to further develop and/or define appropriate performance indicators as a requirement for future PPR/IMRT exercises. An example of work in progress is the current by CCI to completely review its strategic directions (including mission statement) which is expected to lead to a completely revised logic framework.	VCAs	Ongoing	In progress

Executive Summary

Introduction

International volunteers help improve the lives of people and their communities in developing countries around the world by working with and strengthening Southern social and economic development organizations. In Canada, Volunteer Cooperation Agencies (VCAs) work with Canadian and developing country partners to shape and deliver development initiatives to benefit participating individuals and communities, and their overseas work echoes in Canada, as they engage the Canadian public in international development. CIDA has supported international volunteer cooperation since its creation more than 35 years ago. Currently, volunteer cooperation is funded by CIDA's Canadian Partnership Branch (CPB) and managed by CPB's Agency Services and Canadian Relations Division.

In recent years CIDA and the VCAs realized the need for a more coordinated and systematic approach to enhance the potential effectiveness of volunteer cooperation. In 2002 CIDA adopted a program approach to volunteer cooperation and in 2004 created the Volunteer Cooperation Program (VCP). For the period 2004/05 to 2008/09, $203M has been allocated to the ten VCAs that receive funding through the program (AFS IC, CCI, CESO, CUSO, CWY, Oxfam-Québec, SUCO, VSO Canada, and WUSC/CECI joint initiative Uniterra).

CIDA's Performance and Knowledge Management Branch (PKMB) initiated a program review of the Volunteer Cooperation Program (VCP) to determine the relevance and effectiveness of volunteer sending as a delivery mechanism for CIDA's aid program. In June 2004, CIDA commissioned Universalia to assist in designing and managing the review of VCP and to produce the report. In addition, CIDA commissioned Universalia, E.T. Jackson and Associates and *SALASAN*/GeoSpatial to collect and analyze data in four study areas to inform the report.

The program review had three main objectives:

1) To identify the results (development and other) of volunteer cooperation (what difference does it make?);

2) To assess whether the volunteer cooperation approach is effective – from both development and economic perspectives;

3) To identify how CIDA and VCAs can improve the performance of the volunteer cooperation program from both developmental and management perspectives.

The overall review framework focused on the context for volunteer cooperation, and the developmental and operational performance of the program. It provided a strategy for data collection and analysis in four study areas: Context and CIDA Management, Developing Country Organizations (DCOs), Public Engagement (PE), and Returning Volunteers (RV). Since there had been no established program framework for the period covered by the review, the review team worked with CIDA and VCAs to identify inferred results in each study area to use as a framework for the assessment.

Key Findings and Conclusions

Changing International Context

The context within which Canada's support to international development cooperation takes place has changed significantly in the last 10 to 15 years. As the world is changing and global relationships are shifting and maturing, the relevance and role of volunteer cooperation is increasing significantly. As ideas about the purpose of international cooperation evolve and re-focus, so have expectations regarding the results of volunteer cooperation and how they should be achieved.

The advent of globalization, an increasingly inter-connected world, the reality of fiscal deficits as well as the mixed record of 50 years of international development assistance have resulted in donors adopting a set of principles for development effectiveness (*Shaping the 21st Century*, OECD, 1996) and a new 'road map' for development cooperation (Millennium Development Goals, UN, 2000). In most developing countries, the global agenda among donors is being translated into national poverty reduction strategies which, when paired with policies of decentralization, increase the need for civil societies in the South to mobilize around the delivery of such strategies as well as to ensure public accountability and good governance. This coincides with an increased worldwide interest in international development issues and international volunteerism in the wake of globalization and such international events as the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the United States of America and the recent Asian tsunami.

Together these changes have had significant impacts on the supply and demand for international volunteers, the modes and management of volunteer sending and cooperation, the level and type of government support for volunteer sending and cooperation, and the programming approaches used by Volunteer Cooperation Agencies around the world and in Canada.

Increasing Canadian Support for Volunteer Cooperation

The Government of Canada currently supports international volunteer cooperation through three major programs (the Volunteer Cooperation Program, International Youth Internships, and the Canada Corps Initiative) that use a variety of mechanisms to achieve results in developing countries and in Canada. In addition, the Voluntary Sector Programs Division of CPB funds other volunteer-sending organizations (Aga Khan Foundation of Canada). To our knowledge, however, the government does not have a policy that states Canada's goals and rationale for volunteer cooperation and that clarifies how each program contributes to the achievement of the goal.

Canada is in the midst of a foreign policy review and it appears that there will be an increased emphasis and support for the active involvement by Canadians in international cooperation, both internationally and in Canada. In the last few years, CIDA has been reviewing the role, rationale, and added-value of the Canadian voluntary sector and private sector partners in Canada's ODA program to improve collaboration. CPB has indicated that it is moving towards programming approaches that will foster local ownership as well as engagement of Canadian civil society in development. These will be reflected in the Agency's 2010 Vision statement.

CPB's programming budget has declined over the past ten years, both in nominal terms, and in terms of its relative proportion of the overall CIDA budget. Support to international volunteer cooperation was also cut back significantly during this period, as was support for Canadian public engagement. However, the recent creation of a corporate Volunteer Cooperation Program, the inclusion of a Canadian public engagement component to this program, an increase in the relative share of CPB's budget to VCP from 14% to 16%, and the creation of Canada Corps mark a renewed commitment by CIDA to international volunteer cooperation.

Volunteer Cooperation Results in Developing Countries and Canada

CIDA support for the VCP is contributing to significant development results in both developing countries and Canada. In developing countries, DCOs were overwhelmingly positive in their assessment of the impact that volunteers and the VCAs have had on their organizations' motivation, capacities and performance. They report significant positive changes to their organizational culture, systems, processes, programs, visibility and reputations and also report positive impacts on their clientele. However, the capacity development approaches and strategies employed by the different VCAs, and the level of resources, tools and skills are mixed, evolving and require the continued attention of most VCAs.

In Canada, the VCP has had profound impacts on volunteers themselves – on their values and beliefs, as global citizens, their skill levels, the career and education decisions they have made on their return, and their involvement and support to local community or international development. Although still in its early days, the VCP support to public engagement work is having positive effects on Canadians' understanding

of, and openness to, different cultures as well as their knowledge of development issues, leading to increased involvement in international development and support to the development programs of VCAs. However, the public engagement approaches and strategies employed by the different VCAs, and the level of resources, tools and skills are mixed, evolving and require the continued attention of most VCAs. Moreover, some significant opportunities to achieve results with the Canadian public and to harness returned volunteers to this effect have been missed. CIDA's renewed support to VCA public engagement activities provides the basis to tap into some of this potential.

Ongoing Relevance of Volunteer Cooperation

The importance of international volunteer cooperation rests in part on the recognition that volunteers are able and effective agents for the strengthening of civil societies in the South. Volunteer cooperation is also viewed in many Northern countries as an effective way of engaging individual citizens as well as organizations and society at large in international development.

There is every indication that VCA programs are closely aligned with CIDA development priorities. The review clearly demonstrates the value of international volunteer cooperation in terms of its developmental impact, especially in its contribution to strengthening of civil societies in the South as attested not only by DCOs but by government representatives. Furthermore, Canadian volunteers represent the human face of Canada's ODA. They are 'grassroots ambassadors' for Canada, and in their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, gender and age group mix they are a true reflection of the new multicultural society that Canada has become. There is every indication that Canadian volunteers and Canadian international volunteer cooperation are highly valued, but in typically Canadian fashion too often seem to go un-acknowledged and un-celebrated.

Maturing Management and Relationships

There have been significant improvements in how CIDA's volunteer cooperation investments are being managed, both by CPB and by the VCAs. There have also been some significant shifts in the management, governance and strategic directions of VCAs in the last five to ten years, which is bringing new energy, experience and ways of working in the sector, as well as increasing the respect for VCAs. There have also been positive changes in relationships among the VCAs, and between the VCAs and CPB. Overall, new and stronger, mutually supportive relationships and partnerships are emerging.

Managing VCP Strategically

CPB's decision to create VCP was a positive step for various strategic, management and administrative reasons. First, the creation of such a program signals CPB's (and thus CIDA's) interest and support for volunteer cooperation. From a strategic point of view, it provides the Agency with an important opportunity to clarify and define how this investment in volunteer cooperation complements Canada's other important international volunteering programs, International Youth Internships and the Canada Corps Initiative. It also creates some management and administrative efficiencies for both CIDA and the VCAs through the establishment and utilization of common criteria, procedures, and requirements.

VCP has been operational as a program for less than one year, during which period considerable time and energy was invested by CIDA in important and necessary program start-up activities such as finalizing program agreements with the ten VCAs and launching this program review. The VCAs have been similarly occupied in starting up new programs and/or updating existing ones. Thus, CIDA/CPB and the VCAs are at relatively early stages of a new type of relationship and actively exploring how to do this effectively. Over the past few decades, CIDA has administered individual contribution agreements with VCAs. CPB is now in the early stages of assuming a new, additional role of managing the VCP program portfolio strategically. This is a major transformation that needs to be explicitly recognized, acknowledged and resourced as it suggests the need for new modus operandi in CPB with several implications for CIDA management practices and for VCAs.

Power of Volunteering

The very nature of volunteering – giving up position, salary and comfortable lifestyle, leaving home and loved ones, and doing so with humility and respect, motivated primarily by a desire to help and not harm – makes volunteering powerful and has an important bearing on the level of impact that volunteers have. One of the reasons international volunteering is effective in bringing about change is the fact that volunteers come from a different background (social, cultural, economic, work experience, etc.) than their developing country counterparts. They see things differently, do things differently, ask different questions. When this is done with sensitivity and respect, it has an incredible potential to stimulate reflection, generate new energy, and bring about change. The volunteer does not have to be from Canada or another Northern country; a volunteer from a different country in the South (as well as South-North volunteer placements) generates the same stimulating effect.

International volunteering is a powerful mechanism in development co-operation for several reasons. It forges bonds between and among Canadians (be they individual volunteers, civil society organizations, NGOs or representatives of the Canadian government) and their counterparts in the South, creating the basis for meaningful co-operation, action and results around common goals, be it at community, organizational or societal levels. It fosters the development of social networks for change (or social capital), both in Canada and around the world, mobilizing support for and action in regards to, common global concerns, such as HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation or debt relief. This is an area of tremendous potential, providing possibilities of global collaboration among a wide variety of organizations and networks involved in these and other areas such as education, aboriginal rights, municipal development and so on.

International volunteering also actively engages Canadians in international development through overseas placements, education and/or advocacy campaigns and thus builds Canada's capacity and expertise in international development, at individual, organizational and national levels. It supports Canadian values related to tolerance and trust and help to deepen Canadians' understanding of others in our multi-cultural society. It also helps to build a supportive constituency for Canada's aid program and Canada's role in the world. Finally, it provides a human face for Canada's ODA program in both Canada and in the South.

Recommendations to CIDA

1. CIDA should develop a Statement on International Volunteering that clearly defines the purpose and expected results of CIDA's overall investments in international volunteer cooperation.

The Statement should clarify how different CIDA investments in volunteer cooperation complement one another and other government investments. Moreover, in keeping with the whole of government approach, CIDA could also engage other government departments in this initiative. This Statement should be displayed prominently in CIDA internal and external communications, including the CIDA web site.

2. CIDA (Canadian Partnership Branch) should develop strategic programmatic approaches that it will use to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate the Volunteer Cooperation Program in its dynamic context.

Needs assessment: Since the CPB is in the early stages of managing the recently established Volunteer Cooperation Program portfolio, this is an opportune time to reflect on its satisfaction with past management practices that tended to focus on the administration of VCA agreements, and its need for new practices and/or resources (human, financial, other) to support more strategic, focused programming approaches. In this vein, those managing the VCP could meet with the representatives of other CIDA programs that have recently undertaken similar transformation processes (such as CIDA's Pan African Program) to benefit from their lessons learned.

Monitoring the context: Given the rapidly evolving contexts within which the VCP operates, it will be vital that managers employ such approaches to monitor the changing context, assess the implications for the program, and adapt the program (vision, purpose, expected results, strategies) as required to keep the program relevant.

Longer-term planning horizons: the Canadian Partnership Branch should also consider developing longer planning horizons for new programs (say three years or more, rather than one year or less) to accommodate the VCAs' program cycles, which typically involve multi-year commitments to partners overseas. This would give CIDA, VCAs and their partners overseas time to plan for and adjust to significant changes such as major changes in financial resources.

Portfolio management: Moreover, CIDA (CPB) should consider adopting some "portfolio management" approaches that complement existing administrative practices, keeping a closer eye on the return on such investments (i.e. results, impacts and value-added), given program portfolio objectives, and making necessary adjustments to the VCP program portfolio over time as required to increase its relevance and/or returns as required. The CPB should also consider allocating some flexible program resources within the VCP specifically for the purpose of rewarding performance and innovation of programming by existing and/or new VCAs.

3. CIDA (CPB) should review and sharpen the existing program's logic and performance measurement frameworks in order to clarify, focus and distinguish cross-cutting volunteer cooperation program synergies from the sum of VCA results. As part of this review it should consider removing organizations from the VCP portfolio whose program purposes are not congruent with VCP's primary purposes. It should also clarify and streamline reporting requirements at program and sub-program levels.

This type of analysis can be then used to inform and clarify CIDA information needs at the program level, as well as CIDA officers' responsibilities, and systems for collecting and utilizing this information. It will also help CIDA to clarify its information needs at the sub-program investment level (e.g. VCA) in order to streamline VCA reporting requirements and increase the emphasis on cumulative results over time.

As part of this review CIDA should consider removing Canada World Youth and AFS IC from the list of VCAs currently included under the VCP since their program purposes do not include achievement of developmental results in the South, one of VCP's primary purposes.

CIDA should continue to provide financial and moral support to VCAs in developing and maintaining results-tracking systems. The first important step will be for the Canadian Partnership Branch and Canadian Crossroads International (CCI) to assess the lessons learned from the pilot with CCI and identify how other VCAs can benefit from that experience.

Recommendations to CIDA and the VCAs

4. CIDA, in association with the Volunteer Cooperation Agencies, should review and define how both will track and report the costs and benefits of volunteer cooperation programming in the future.

While VCA program designs and expected results have changed, stakeholders continue to rely, inappropriately, on the number of volunteers placed by VCAs and the cost per VCA placement. CIDA and the VCAs both need to: identify the right unit(s) of analysis, clarify expected benefits and associated costs, determine how and by whom benefits will be tracked and communicated, and allocate resources for tracking and communication) when determining the costs and benefits of volunteer cooperation.

5. CIDA, in association with the VCAs, should review the status and performance of VCAs' PE programs in one year to assess their overall effectiveness and areas for improvement.

Most of the VCAs' public engagement programs are in relatively early stages of development, while CIDA's own strategy is under development. In order to assess the relevance and congruence of these increasingly important investments, CIDA and the VCAs should consider undertaking a joint review of these public engagement programs of all VCAs in 2006. In order to manage resources effectively, CIDA and the VCAs could entertain the possibility of some peer reviews among the VCAs.

6. CIDA (CPB) and the VCAs should actively share knowledge about and champion VCP more effectively through internal and external channels. In particular, a description of VCP and the VCAs currently receiving VCP support should be provided on CIDA (CPB's) web site. CIDA should also consider the establishment of one or more awards, events and/or mechanisms as suggested in section 5.2.2 of this report. CIDA and VCAs should play proactive roles in sharing lessons and knowledge about VCP performance and challenges with others in Canada and internationally.

Recommendations to the VCAs

7. The VCAs should continue to fine-tune their DCO programming approaches to enhance their effectiveness in providing capacity development support to developing country organizations.

In particular, VCAs should pay increased attention to acquiring, developing and/or refining their own organizational assessment methodologies and diagnostic tools to assess DCO context and priority needs with regard to their longer-term sustainability. They should also set aside the necessary resources (financial, human and other) to prepare volunteers for their capacity development roles prior to placement, and support them with specialized expertise and/or support mechanisms once they are in place (including additional capacity development training of their program staff). VCAs should consider refining Organizational Development (OD) tools and approaches used by volunteers to build DCO capacities, and providing financial and other resources that may be required to complement the support provided by volunteers. Finally, VCAs should take measures to assess the impact of, and mitigate against, the potential disadvantages and pitfalls of multi-partner placements.

8. The VCAs should continue to develop and refine their PE strategies and programs.

In particular, VCAs should pay attention to defining a clear vision, purpose, design logic and results for these programs in terms of engaging Canadians (and not other agendas); defining clearer strategies for engaging RVs more effectively in their PE programs; involving other VCAs and/or other civil society organizations in Canada to realize increased efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of PE results; defining meaningful, appropriate indicators and allocating the resources required to track and measure performance of these programs; and identifying cost-effective ways to communicate the results of these programs with CIDA and other VCAs.

9. Building on the positive relationships already established in Canada, VCAs should explore if and how they can work more cooperatively with other VCAs and Canadian representatives abroad.

Building on the strengths of the relationships among the VCAs already established in Canada, VCAs should consider if and how these can be extended to their work in the South. Similarly, VCAs and CPB should explore how they might work more effectively and systematically with Canadian representatives abroad, and identify any support required from CPB to accomplish this.

10. VCAs should review and revise existing logic frameworks and PMFs for the local capacity building and PE components to ensure that planned results are realistic and focused.

In addition, the VCAs should review and revise the indicators used to measure progress to ensure that they are appropriate given the proposed results, are affordable to use in data collection, and that there is a balance of qualitative and quantitative measurements.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

International Volunteer Cooperation

International volunteers help improve the lives of people and their communities in developing countries around the world by working with and strengthening Southern social and economic development organizations. These unpaid individuals contribute their time, expertise and experience to global sustainable human

> *"Volunteers have always played an important role in support of Canada's work in international cooperation and they remain the face of Canada in developing countries. These Canadians devote their time, experience and expertise in pursuit of sustainable development, expressing Canada's desire to contribute to a safer, more secure and more prosperous world."*
> Aileen Carroll, Minister for International Cooperation

development. They often work in developing countries as part of a volunteer sending program (supported by funding from a government agency or a non-government organization), but they may also work in their own country, providing services related to global issues.

Volunteer cooperation agencies (VCAs) are organizations that are involved in both volunteer sending[2] and receiving, in combination with development work, as a means to achieving specific goals in developing countries and engaging citizens in their own countries.

In Canada, Volunteer Cooperation Agencies (VCAs) are not-for-profit organizations (NGOs) that have identified international volunteer cooperation as one

> In Europe, many volunteer sending agencies are adopting the term *development worker* (DW) instead of *volunteer* to emphasize the valuable work accomplished by these often highly skilled and experienced people.
>
> Several Canadian NGOs have adopted the term cooperant for similar reasons.
>
> In some agencies, DWs receive full salaries and work under civil service conditions (e.g. Netherlands, Germany), while others work under conditions that involve some degree of sacrifice (e.g. UK, UNV, Ireland).[1]

of their primary activities. These organizations work with Canadian and developing country partners to shape and deliver development initiatives that aim to benefit participating individuals and communities in developing countries, and their overseas work echoes in Canada, as they engage the Canadian public in international development.

CIDA's Role in Volunteer Cooperation

CIDA has supported international volunteer cooperation since its creation more than 35 years ago.[3] Currently, volunteer sending is funded by CIDA's Canadian Partnership Branch (CPB), and is managed by CPB's Agency Services and Canadian Relations Division.

In recent years CIDA and the VCAs realized the need for a more coordinated and systematic approach to enhance the potential effectiveness of volunteer cooperation.[4] In 2002 CIDA adopted a program approach to volunteer cooperation, with the aim of aligning future initiatives to the principles outlined in *Strengthening Aid Effectiveness*. In March 2004, CIDA sought Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) approval for contribution agreements with CUSO, CWY, Oxfam-Québec and WUSC/CECI (for their joint Uniterra

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[1] Tim Whyte, The Use of Personnel in Development Cooperation: A Study of European Personnel-Sending Agencies, Copenhagen, 2003

[2] *Volunteer cooperation* refers to the use of volunteers in international cooperation who work at home or in another country, while the term *volunteer sending* is used to describe the action of sending volunteers to work in other countries.

[3] Looking Ahead, Consultation Report Canadian International Volunteer Coalition, December 5, 2001, Introduction.

[4] RMAF-Volunteer Cooperation Program (p.2, March 1,2004)

initiative) in the amount of $172 million over fiscal years 2004/05 to 2008/09 in support of CIDA's volunteer cooperation initiatives. In addition, the Minister for International Cooperation and the CPB Vice President approved an additional $31 million in funding for five smaller VCAs (CCI, CESO, SUCO, VSO Canada and AFS IC).

The VCP Review – Purpose and Objectives

With the adoption of a program approach to volunteer cooperation, CIDA's Performance and Knowledge Management Branch (PKMB) initiated a program review of the Volunteer Cooperation Program (VCP) to determine the relevance and effectiveness of volunteer sending as a delivery mechanism for CIDA's aid program.[5] The results of the review would be "key for continued support from Treasury Board for CIDA's multi-year volunteer sending program." The review was intended to be collaborative, involving CPB, VCAs and their partners.

In June 2004, CIDA commissioned Universalia to assist in designing and managing the review of VCP and to produce the report. In addition, CIDA commissioned Universalia, E.T. Jackson and Associates and *SALASAN*/GeoSpatial to collect and analyze data in four study areas to inform the report (see sidebar) – these studies were carried out between September and November 2004.
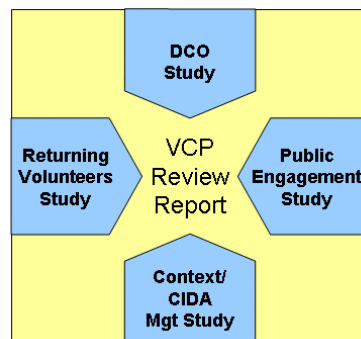
The program review had three main objectives:

1. To identify the results (development and other) of volunteer cooperation (what difference does it make?)

2. To assess whether the volunteer cooperation approach is effective – from both development and economic perspectives

3. To identify how CIDA and VCAs can improve the performance of the volunteer cooperation program from both developmental and management perspectives.

Organization of the Report

This document constitutes the draft report of the review of the Volunteer Cooperation Program (VCP). Following this introductory section, the report is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides a profile of the VCAs and CIDA support to VCAs over the past 10 years.

- Chapter 3 identifies key elements in the VCP contexts and analyzes their actual and potential impacts on the program.

- Chapter 4 reviews the developmental performance of VCP.

- Chapter 5 reviews how VCP has been managed by VCAs and CIDA.

- Chapter 6 offers conclusions and key recommendations for the remainder of the program and identifies lessons learned – both developmental and operational.

All appendices referred to in the text are presented in a separate document, Volume II.

Throughout the report, we have used this icon to identify suggestions and considerations, and foreshadow recommendations.

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[5] Volunteer Cooperation Program Proposal to TBS (undated) p. 19

1.2   Methodology

1.2.1   Overall Approach and Framework

In order to develop a reliable and valid overview of volunteer cooperation, in terms of its past and current context, we developed a review framework and a strategy for data collection.

A summary of the key review foci is provided in Exhibit 1.1. The complete review framework, presented in Appendix I, includes key components, major questions and sub-questions, and key sources of data and the responsibilities of the study teams.

Exhibit 1.1   International Volunteer Cooperation Review Foci

FOCI	PURPOSE
Contextual reviews	Identify and analyze obstacles and opportunities of evolving relevant international and Canadian contexts (external and internal) that have affected, positively or negatively, volunteer cooperation results and/or management over the last ten years or that may affect volunteer cooperation in the future
Developmental Performance	Assess the cumulative developmental performance of volunteer cooperation in the past five years in terms of results achievement, cost-effectiveness, sustainability and relevance in three areas: Results on developing country organizations, returned volunteers and the Canadian public
Operational Performance	Assess operational performance of the VCAs and CIDA in managing the program over the past five years
Lessons Learned	Identify key developmental and operational lessons from volunteer cooperation
Recommendations	Formulate recommendations, if necessary, regarding needed changes or improvements in the design and management of CIDA's Volunteer Cooperation Program

1.2.2   Study Methodologies

This section provides an overview of the methodologies used in the studies on Context and CIDA Management, Developing Country Organizations (DCO), Public Engagement (PE), and Returning Volunteers (RV). Although these studies were consistent with the overall review's methodology and framework, each study developed its own individual methodological approach and its own workplan, which dovetailed with the workplan for the overall review. (See Appendix II for lists of people interviewed and Appendix III for documents reviewed for each study.)

Framework for reviewing results: Since there was no established program framework for the period under review,[6] the review team worked with CIDA and VCAs to identify inferred categories of results to use in the review. (See revised VCP review workplan – Universalia, September 2004).

Selection of VCAs: In selecting VCAs for the four studies, the maturity of VCA programs in capacity building and public engagement was an important factor, given the review's emphasis on inferred results. CIDA identified the initial list of VCAs for each study; this was then discussed with the VCAs and revised as required.

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[6] The first VCP program framework received TBS approval in March 2004.

Study on Context and CIDA Management

The study on Context and CIDA Management identified the key challenges and opportunities in the evolving international, domestic, CIDA and VCA contexts and how CIDA has managed the VCP over time. To inform this study, the team undertook extensive document reviews, conducted a focus group with all ten participating VCAs, interviewed the Executive Directors of seven VCAs, and conducted interviews with 22 CIDA staff and representatives of other development agencies (see list of people interviewed in Appendix II).

Study on Developing Country Organizations

The DCO study reviewed the effects/impacts of volunteer cooperation on DCOs and their communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and how the VCAs are managing such activities. The team examined the volunteer cooperation activities of three VCAs: CECI, CUSO and Oxfam-Québec. It focused on the capacity building results on their partner DCOs in four countries, namely Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Vietnam. The team conducted individual interviews with a total of 117 CIDA staff, VCA and DCO representatives and volunteers.

Countries sampled: Of the four countries included in the field review, Burkina Faso and Vietnam are not countries of focus for CIDA. Burkina Faso is the only one of the four countries considered 'low level' according to the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI). The other three are at the lower end of 'mid level' countries according to the UNDP Human Development Report 2004. Although not a consideration in selecting the countries, it is noteworthy that all four countries have been through, or are in the process of implementing, significant decentralization with devolution of government responsibilities and services to local levels of government.

DCO Sample: The three VCAs were asked to identify a list of four to five DCOs per country. In a few cases, more than five were identified. The review team then made a selection, in consultation with the VCAs, taking into consideration such factors as length of DCO-VCA relationship, number of volunteers placed, location of DCO (in the capital, outside the capital), and focus of DCO work. Twenty-three DCOs were included in the DCO study. A profile of the reviewed DCOs is included in Appendix IV.

Focus: The review team examined capacity building results by looking at three broad areas, as shown in the sidebar.

Data sources: To assess the results of VCA volunteer cooperation activities on DCOs, DCO representatives were asked how their organization had benefited, if at all, from their relationship with the VCA

Inferred Results: DCO Capacity Building

Impacts on DCO motivation
(beliefs, values, attitude/outlook and vision/mission)

Impacts on DCO organizational capacities
(knowledge, skills/abilities, systems, linkages)

Impacts on DCO organizational performance
(relevance and reach, efficiency and effectiveness, viability)

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in the past five years, and what had been the contribution of the volunteer(s), if any, to the DCO. Similar questions were put to the VCA field representatives, and where possible, to the volunteers working with these DCOs that were still in the country. Reports and other documentation, such as the volunteer placement/project descriptions and various reports, were also reviewed. These secondary sources of information helped reinforce and cross-reference statements made by DCO representatives, which remain the primary source of data. Other interested stakeholders were also consulted, including representatives of the aid section of Canadian Embassies/High Commission, the national government and other international volunteer agencies.

Study on Public Engagement

The Public Engagement study examined the public engagement activities of five VCAs: CESO, CECI, CWY, CUSO, and Oxfam-Québec over a five-year period (1999-2004).

Focus: The review team assessed the results of VCAs' public engagement activities in four broad areas, as shown in the sidebar.

VCA stakeholders sampled: Identifying comparable interviewees for

> **Inferred Results: Public Engagement**
>
> Change in Canadians' level of understanding and openness to different cultures, world views and perspectives
>
> Change in Canadians' level of knowledge, awareness and/or sensitivity to development and related issues
>
> Change in Canadians' motivation to get involved in activities, or learn more about issues addressed by VCAs
>
> Increase or maintenance[7] of Canadian public's support for and/or involvement in international development, related community work and/or with VCAs

each VCA was a key challenge, as the VCAs are highly diverse. However, the methodological approach of 'boundary partners' enabled the team to identify three key categories of interviewees:

- Audience members of public engagement event (within five-year period) or members of target group upon whom VCA strategy anticipated an effect;

- Returned Volunteers who have conducted public engagement activities in past five years; and

- Organizational Partners with whom VCAs have carried out public engagement activities in the past five years.

The team conducted individual interviews with a total of four CIDA staff, representatives of six VCAs, 30 participants in VCA-sponsored public engagement activities, representatives of 20 Canadian civil society organizations, as well as several work placements and host families.

Public Engagement was not a distinct component of VCA funding agreements with CIDA until April 2004. Therefore, while the review examined public engagement activities undertaken by VCAs, the primary intention was to learn about, rather than judge the performance of these activities. It should also be noted that Oxfam-Québec was the only VCA (for the period under review) with a public engagement program that is distinct from its volunteer-cooperation program. Finally, due to the limited number of DCOs reviewed, the results traced by this study should be regarded as indicative – and not representative – of VCAs' public engagement activities and strategies.

Study on Returned Volunteers

The Returned Volunteer (RV) study examined the results that volunteer sending has had over the past ten years (1994-2004) on volunteers who have gone overseas with Canadian Crossroads International (CCI), Canada World Youth (CWY), VSO Canada (VSO), and World University Service of Canada (WUSC).

> **Inferred Results: Returned Volunteers**
>
> Effects on the motivation of returned volunteers (beliefs, values, etc.)
>
> Effects on the capacities of returned volunteers (skills, knowledge, abilities)
>
> Effects on the performance of returned volunteers (careers, education, etc.)

Focus: The review team assessed the results of volunteer sending on the returned volunteers by looking

at three broad areas, which were defined as inferred results by the VCAs, as shown in the sidebar.

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[7] Some interviewees suggested maintaining their involvement or support constituted an increased involvement – meaning that without the VCAs' public engagement activities, their involvement would have decreased. This indicator has been revised from its original form in the workplan, to reflect this finding.

Sampling of Returned Volunteers: The main methodologies used in this study were in-depth interviews with 53 returned volunteers (RV) from all four organizations and a web-based confidential survey of 2600 returned volunteers that was posted through VCA listservs and RV email databases, with a response rate of 21%. Respondents from CWY dominated the study sample, reflective of large number of volunteers placed annually compared to the other VCAs in this study. While CWY's program is youth focused, has a shorter duration, and is focused on educational as opposed to development results, the study found that RV results for CWY and the other VCAs are not significantly different. (See Appendix V for complete information on sampling and analysis.)

1.2.3 Review Team

The review was conducted by three Canadian consulting firms. The teams worked independently to collect data, and worked together to analyze data, develop key findings and prepare the report. The teams and their responsibilities are summarized below.

Exhibit 1.2   Review Team Composition and Responsibilities

RESPONSIBLE FIRM	TEAM MEMBERS	FIRM RESPONSIBILITIES
Universalia	Geraldine Cooney (Team Leader) Anna Grzybinska Louise Mailloux	Design and manage the overall VCP review Collect and analyze data for study of the context and CIDA management Prepare the report
E.T. Jackson and Associates	Paul Turcot (Team Leader) Jacques Carrière Brian Rowe Marielle Gallant	Collect and analyze data for study on the results and management of volunteer cooperation programs on developing country organizations (DCOs) Assist in preparing the report
SALASAN/ GeoSpatial	Peter Hoffman (Team Leader) Dawn McLean Cory Rabourn Rebeccah Nelems Ida Giordano	Collect and analyze data for the study on the results and management of volunteer cooperation programs on former volunteers Collect and analyze data for the study on the results and management of volunteer cooperation programs on the Canadian public Assist in preparing the report

1.3 Limitations

The limitations encountered in carrying out this assignment are summarized below.

Study timing: The study was undertaken in the first year of the VCP in order to permit CIDA to fulfill commitments made to TBS. However, since several program investments in VCAs are only six to nine months old, it was premature to comment on the appropriateness or effectiveness of some recent program changes (e.g. reporting on results). Moreover, since several important policy documents were under development at the time of our review (e.g. the International Policy Statement and the Public Engagement Policy), this limited our assessments of the relevance of the VCP. However, since such policies are expected in early 2005, we expect that subsequent revisions or updates to this report can reflect such policies, if/as required.

Time limitations: To meet CIDA timelines, the report was written over an intensive six week period to late February 2005. As a consequence, there has been limited time for follow up discussions of key findings and recommendations with CIDA and the VCAs; this is now planned for April 2005.

2.   Volunteer Cooperation in Canada: A Profile

2.1   Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the Government of Canada's support for volunteer cooperation, and CIDA's support for volunteer cooperation agencies over past ten years. It also presents a profile of the ten volunteer cooperation agencies reviewed in this study. The key findings presented in this chapter are supported by more detailed information provided in Appendices VI to XVII.

2.2   Canadian Government Support for Volunteer Cooperation

Finding 1:   The Government of Canada currently supports international volunteer cooperation through three programs that use a variety of mechanisms to achieve results in developing countries and in Canada.

The Canadian government currently sponsors three major programs that support international volunteering: the Volunteer Cooperation Program (VCP), the International Youth Internship Program (IYIP), and the recently launched Canada Corps Initiative. Five Canadian government departments support these programs – CIDA supports all three programs while Foreign Affairs Canada, Environment Canada, Canadian Heritage, and Industry Canada offer international youth internships through YES. There is some inter-departmental coordination of the international volunteering programs that fall under the umbrella of the Youth Employment Strategy (YES) funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

> The International Youth Internships (IYI) is part of the Youth Employment Strategy (YES) a Government of Canada initiative designed to help young people, particularly those facing barriers to employment, get the information and gain the skills, work experience and abilities they need to make a successful transition to the workplace.

The programs (which are compared in Exhibit 2.1) are similar in that they involve Canadians as volunteers or interns in international development activities; the purposes of the programs also overlap. However, there several notable differences in the programs, including:

- their program purposes – the three programs place varying emphasis on developmental results, Canadian public engagement, and Canadian youth skills development;

- their program foci – while VCP supports all CIDA's current ODA priorities, Canada Corps focuses exclusively on governance. YES priorities vary by department.

- the types of volunteers supported – Canada Corps and IYIP place Canadians overseas, while VCP supports multi-directional placements;

- their stage of development and history in working with implementing partners – Canada Corps, the newest program, is evolving daily; IYIP is relatively young and is developing relationships with implementing partners; the ten agencies of the VCP have been working in the field for almost 40 years and have long-established partner relationships.

Later sections of this report suggest that CIDA consider clarifying how these programs complement one another (see sections 4.5.1 and 5.3.1).

Exhibit 2.1 Overview of GoC International Volunteering Programs[8]

ELEMENT	PROGRAM		
	VCP	**YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY - (INTERNATIONAL YOUTH INTERNSHIPS)**	**CANADA CORPS INITIATIVE**
Origins	VCP was established by CPB as a program in 2004. Canada has supported volunteer cooperation programs of Canadian VCAs since 1961.	HRDC (1997)	Prime Minister (2004)
Participating GoC agencies/departments	CIDA	CIDA, FAC, Environment Canada, Canadian Heritage and Industry Canada	CIDA
Types of volunteering supported	Includes a range of the following: Sending Canadian experts overseas (North-South volunteers) Brings Southern experts to Canada (South North volunteers) Sends Southern experts to other Southern countries (South-south volunteers) Sends Canadian youth overseas	Sends Canadian youth overseas	Sends Canadian experts overseas Canada Corps' website indicates that it will also support Youth internships.
Program's developmental purposes	Support CIDA's mandate and objectives in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Build capacity of local partners to improve economic and social well-being in a manner consistent with the principles of Aid Effectiveness Define and meet local needs in a sustainable manner through placements of qualified Canadian volunteers and volunteer exchange programs	Some programs help build local capacities (e.g. Netcorps in information technology capacities)	Promote good governance and institution building in developing countries and fragile states Help build lasting institutions, enabling countries to take charge of their own development. Help local governments respond better to citizens' needs.
Other program purposes	Promote a better understanding of international development issues to the Canadian public at large	Provides a "first international development experience" to youth	Engaging the Canadian public Mobilization Canadians to go abroad Supporting coherence of governance programming Expanding Canada's governance base of knowledge

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[8] Information about the VCP originated from the RMAF to TBS and from CIDA's web site for Canada Corps. Information about other programs was gleaned from documentation, websites and officers in charge of these programs.

ELEMENT	PROGRAM		
	VCP	**YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY - (INTERNATIONAL YOUTH INTERNSHIPS)**	**CANADA CORPS INITIATIVE**
Foci	CIDA's six ODA priorities (including Governance)	Varies by Department (e.g. CIDA – ODA priorities; Environment Canada – Environment).	Governance
Overall 2005 budget	$42M	CIDA – $6.4M FAC – $6.4M Industry Canada (IC) Netcorps– $3.5M Environment Canada (EC) Environmental Corps – $2.1M	$15M
Primary Overseas Partners	Non-governmental and community-based organizations	Varies by program	Public and para-public institutions
Nature of Relationship with Overseas Partners	Solidarity between civil society in Canada and South with emphasis on capacity development	Service oriented	Not defined
Program Management	CIDA's Canadian Partnership Branch	Corresponding Federal Departments	CIDA's President Office
Implementing partners	A group of well-known and experienced Canadian NGOs (referred to as VCAs in this report) : CUSO, WUSC/CECI (Uniterra), Oxfam-Québec, CCI, AFS IC, SUCO, CESO, CWY, VSO Canada, and their Southern partners.	Businesses, Municipal governments or band councils, Public health or educational institutions, NGOs (including labour, professional or non-profit associations as well as a number of VCAs).	Canadian government, NGOs, United Nations Volunteers (UNV), Universities.
Volume of Activities	More than 65,000 Canadian volunteers placed between 1961 and 2003 by 10 agencies. Commitment of 2,500 volunteer placements/year between 2004-09.	Approximate number of interns to date: CIDA (IYIP) – 3,546 FAC – 3,215 IC (Netcoprs) – 1,500 EC (Environnemental Corps) – 1,500	In 2004, 463 election observers were placed in the Ukraine. At the time of writing, Canada Corps' website indicates a commitment to place an additional 490 volunteers.
Stage of Program Development	Consolidation of forty years of volunteer sending and cooperation into a program with an established rationale, objectives, procedures and accountability frameworks.	Well established within each department.	Early stages of development: evolving rationale, objectives, foci procedures and implementation.

2.3   CIDA Support for Volunteer Cooperation Agencies

Finding 2:   CIDA has supported the volunteer cooperation activities of VCAs for more than 40 years. The source, purpose and nature of this support have varied considerably during this period of time. The creation of the Volunteer Cooperation Program in 2004 is evidence of the growing importance of volunteer cooperation and represents a major milestone in CIDA's support for VCAs.

Source of support: When CIDA first started supporting CUSO in the 1960s, funds came from the External Aid Office of the Department of External Affairs. Sending Framework in 1999, responsibilities for individual VCAs were split amongst three sections within NGO Division where they remained until the 2003 restructuring. Since 2003, VCP has been housed in CPB's Agency Services and Canadian Relations Division.

Purpose/focus of Support: Over the years, CIDA's support to volunteer cooperation organizations has evolved (see sidebar) but has continued to embrace three main purposes:

- To support developing countries in their development process

- To increase the capacity of Canadians (individual, societal) to either contribute to or be aware of international development issues.

- To support CIDA's mandate and development impact

Nature of Support Provided: VCAs continue to enter into individual contribution agreements with CIDA. However, the duration of these agreements has fluctuated considerably during the last 30 years.

From the 1970s to the mid-1990s, the VCAs usually had one-year agreements with CIDA – although there were occasional three-year agreements. (This appears to have depended on the specific VCA being supported as well as the specific initiative.) Many agreements were for one-off projects (including a number of decentralized projects managed by Partnership Africa Canada and South Asia Partnership).

Between 1995/96 and 2001/02, most VCAs had three-year agreements with CIDA.

Between 2001 and 2004 VCAs had a series of one-and-a-half-year and two-year agreements (reflecting some difficulties at the time between CIDA and the VCAs, and a longer than anticipated review process of the volunteer sending activities in 2002).

In 2004, CIDA signed five-year agreements with most VCAs.

In 2004, CIDA created the Volunteer Cooperation Program which provides a total of $203 million for the period

> CPB's approach to management of and support for international cooperation activities is evolving. For several decades, CPB's support for volunteer cooperation tended to be highly responsive, driven by the objectives, philosophies, cultures of supported VCAs, within the structure of CPB. This changed in 2004 with the creation of VCP and the development of an overall programming framework.

2004/05-2008/09, marking a major milestone in its support for VCAs. This five-year agreement was inspired by the GoC's accord with the Canadian voluntary sector in 2001. The Program has a distinct program logic chain, performance measurement strategy, and indicators to guide VCP investments (see Appendices VI and VII).

Finding 3: **Although financial support for individual VCAs has varied considerably over time, CIDA and CPB overall support for volunteer cooperation has been relatively stable for the past ten years. CPB's planned expenditures for 2004/05 and the signing of five-year agreements with VCAs are recent indications of significantly increased support for volunteer cooperation.**

CIDA support for volunteer cooperation agencies grew in dollar terms from approximately $22 million across seven agencies in 1980[9] to a peak of approximately $57 million in the early 1990s and fell to approximately $42 million for ten agencies in 2004/05[10] (see Exhibit 2.3). Funding has remained relatively stable at $40 million since 1996/97. The projected annual budget for the VCP for the period 2004/05-2008/09 is approximately $42 million per annum, and does not allow for inflation.

As a percentage of CIDA and CPB overall budgets, support for volunteer cooperation has remained relatively stable over the past ten years, at approximately 2% of CIDA's overall budget (see Appendix VIII) and a relatively stable portion of CPB's total budget (around 14%) until 2003/04. It is noteworthy that CPB's planned expenditures for VCP increased to 16% of its overall budget in 2004/05 budget, at a time when CPB's program budget decreased by $30 million, suggesting increased relative support for VCP. Moreover CPB's decision to sign five-year agreements with the VCAs is an important indication of CIDA's support for volunteer cooperation.

Exhibit 2.2 CPB Funding to VCAs 1980-2009 (in $million)

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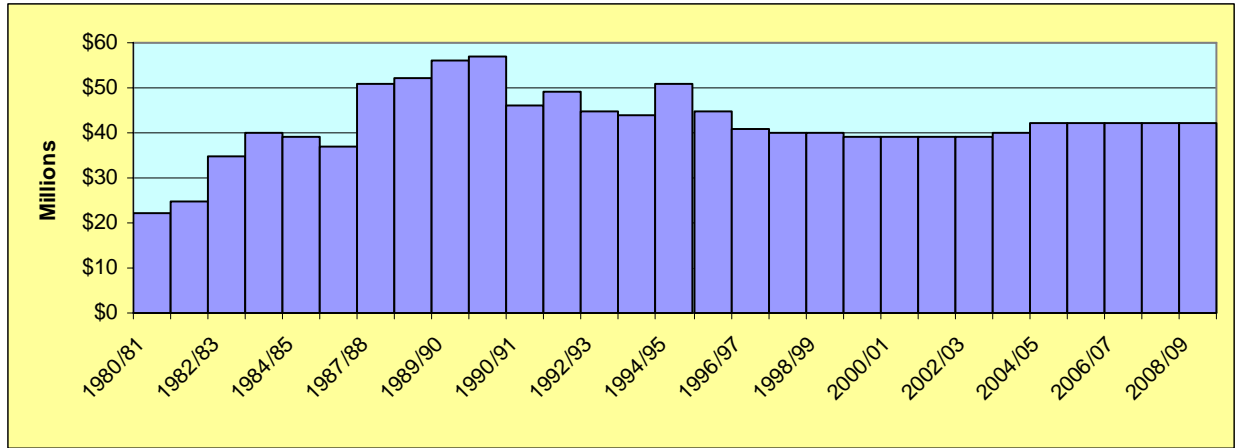
[9] Data for the period 1980-1990 are cited from Évaluation du Programme d'envoi des volontaries (Éconotec Inc., 1992) p.6. Data for 1990/91 to 1994/95 were extracted from CIDA's Corporate Reports Access Facility (CRAFT).

[10] Data for the period 1996-2009 cited from VCAs Budget Allocation Historical Data (May 17, 2004, CPB Branch) (from 1996). Data for 1994/95 and 1995/1996 is from CPB Financial Profile and to be confirmed by CIDA.

2.4 VCA Profile

This section presents a profile of the ten agencies whose programs entail volunteer cooperation or sending and who are currently receiving support under VCP. These include AFS IC, CCI, CECI, CESO, CUSO, CWY, Oxfam-Québec, SUCO, VSO Canada and WUSC. Individual profiles of these organizations are presented in Appendices IX to XVII. (Note: This section does not profile other organizations that may involve volunteers as part of their programs.)

Canada's long tradition of international volunteer cooperation dates back to 1951 when the Colombo Plan was created to assist in the development of newly independent Asian Commonwealth countries. Today, Canada has a wealth of organizations involved in international volunteer cooperation, reportedly greater than other countries.[12]

Over the past 40 years, CIDA-supported volunteer cooperation agencies have fielded around 65,000 volunteers. In 2004 alone, the ten VCAs that are the focus of this review placed more than 2,500 volunteers (short and long-term) overseas and in Canada (see sidebar).

Volunteers placed overseas since 1960 [11]
26,000 (CWY)
13,000 (CUSO)
8,400 (CESO)
5,500 (CCI)
3,500 (CECI)
3,000 (WUSC)
2,500 (SUCO)
2,300 (Oxfam Québec)
60 (AFS IC)
40 (VSO Canada)

Common Characteristics

While Canadian organizations engaged in volunteer cooperation vary in terms of origin, mission, size, and area of operation, they share a number of common organizational and programming characteristics.

Origins: Although the majority of these organizations were created in the 1950s and 1960s[13] some did not begin working in Canada until later. Six of the reviewed VCAs have Canadian origins (the exceptions are AFS IC, CCI, Oxfam-Québec and VSO Canada) and all have Canadian boards and offices. While their original purposes varied (e.g. from cross-cultural exchange to humanitarian or educational assistance, or direct service provision), over the years, most of these VCAs (with the exception of CWY and AFS IC) have adopted an increasingly developmental focus.

Program Focus: Most of the VCAs reviewed consider volunteer cooperation a primary or sole focus of their organization's activities (CECI, WUSC, CUSO and Oxfam-Québec) are also involved in the delivery of bilateral projects). Volunteer cooperation programs of all these organizations have evolved over time. Most have focused their programs on specific countries, sectors or partners. Most define their programs in terms of local capacity building (with the exception of CWY and AFS IC), and most are engaged in some form of public engagement (PE), although this ranges from an overall organizational approach (e.g. CWY) to a distinct program activity (CESO). Seven[14] of the organizations have developed

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[11] Based on data provided by VCAs in February 2005. These data reflect the number of volunteers sent with support of the CIDA Volunteer Cooperation Program. The numbers may include some NetCorps and International Youth Internship Interns. VCAs have also sent other volunteers supported by other funding. CESO estimates reflect the number of placements sent after they computerized their systems in 1980. At the time of writing we have not received a profile from SUCO. AFS IC and VSO Canada started receiving CIDA funding in 2001/02 but have been sending volunteers prior to that date (e.g. VSO Canada has placed 896 volunteers since 1992).

[12] Smillie, Ian. Hubris, Humility and Human Resources, Notes on the Proposed Canada Corps. CCIC, 2004, p. 1

[13] AFS was created during WWI in France as an ambulance service.

[14] CCI, CECI, WUSC, CUSO, Oxfam-Québec, SUCO, VSO Canada

programmatic approaches, and seven[15] work on a long-term basis with their partner organizations in the South.

Supply of Volunteers: Most of the VCAs reviewed report an increasingly diverse group of volunteers (in terms of age, ethnic origin, expertise, experience, and so forth), but quantitative data are not generally available. Women dominate volunteer placements. In nine of the VCAs, women represented between 55% and 75% of placements[16]. The notable exception is CESO, which reports that 24% of its volunteers are women. Most of the interviewed organizations report that the supply of interested volunteers is high and growing and exceeds their program resources, and that demand from developing countries is also high.

Types of Placements: All VCAs reviewed place Canadian volunteers in the South (known as North-South volunteering), and increasing numbers of these organizations are also engaged in other types of placements categorized as South-South (CCI, CUSO, WUSC/CECI – Uniterra), in-country (CUSO) and South-North placements (CCI, CUSO, CWY, WUSC/CECI – Uniterra). In addition to VCP-supported volunteers, most of the organizations also place volunteers (interns) through the Canadian Government Youth Employment Strategy (YES) (i.e. NetCorps and CIDA's International Youth Internship Program). Most of the organizations integrate the YES placements with their capacity building interventions.

Duration of Placements: Most VCAs offer various options to respond to the needs of their identified overseas partners and the supply of interested volunteers. Organizations place volunteers for periods varying from two weeks (e.g. CESO), through six-month placements to several years (e.g. CUSO or WUSC). A recent trend is to place volunteers in more specialized, shorter duration placements.

Funding: Eight of the ten VCAs have received substantial CIDA support for most of their history (see Appendix XVIII) and remain largely dependant on CIDA for their volunteer cooperation programs. VSO Canada and AFS IC are considerably less dependent on CIDA funding.

Notable Differences

While the VCAs reviewed share a number of commonalities, they are also distinguished by several factors. Notable differences are as follows:

Niche: Some of the VCAs have distinct niches (e.g. CWY focuses on youth, VSO Canada on disability, and CESO on retired volunteers and private sector development). Some choose specific countries/regions to work in, while others focus on certain thematic areas (e.g. human rights and social justice).

New programming approaches: Some VCAs, such as VSO Canada, are becoming engaged in national volunteering – this involves building the capacity of volunteer agencies in the South to initiate, manage and/or enhance their own volunteer programs. Others are fostering linkages between Canadian and developing country partners/associations (e.g. CCI).

Client diversification: Some VCAs are capitalizing on their accumulated expertise and positive reputations in volunteer placement to compete internationally (e.g. CECI/WUSC) for opportunities and contracts to manage volunteer cooperation programs for other countries (e.g. United Nations Volunteers [UNV] for the Government of Australia). Others are developing programs in response to requests from the private sector to plan and manage volunteering opportunities for their staff (e.g. VSO Canada and Accenture, a private consulting firm).

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[15] CCI, CECI, WUSC, CUSO, Oxfam-Québec, VSO Canada, SUCO

[16] The reasons behind the current gender mix of volunteers were not explored in any depth in this study. However, this could be examined in the future, as women constitute the majority of volunteers in almost all of the reviewed volunteer programs (except NetCorps) and may have implications for DCO capacity building and PE programs.

Partnerships: Some are entering partnerships, mergers and other forms of increased collaboration to increase their efficiency, effectiveness, and coverage (CECI and WUSC, for example, have formed Uniterra). Some are partnering effectively with Canadian civil society organizations to deliver PE activities in more systematic, sustainable ways.

Number of placements: VCA placements range from 10 to almost 1,050 annually; the number of countries of operation overseas ranges from 3 to 29 (this appears to be a function of the size of a VCA's program budget).

Offices in Canada and overseas: Some VCAs have offices and/or representatives across Canada (e.g. CCI, CUSO,[18] CWY, WUSC), and some have field offices or representatives in the South (e.g. CECI, CESO, CUSO, WUSC, SUCO).

International Connections: Three of the VCAs reviewed (AFS IC, Oxfam-Québec, VSO Canada) are part of larger international organizations and have access to resources (financial and/or other) from their international affiliates that other VCAs may lack.

Amount of support provided: As shown in Exhibit 2.4 below, CPB support to individual VCAs has changed over time. The program supported ten organizations in both 1994/95 and 2004/2005. In the interim, there were two new entrants (AFS IC, VSO Canada) and support for two organizations was discontinued (VICS and OCOD). Additional information on funding provided by CIDA to each VCA is found in Appendix XVIII.

The total budget decreased from about $51M per year in 1994 to $42M per year currently. Some organizations have seen significant cuts in CPB funding over time (CECI, CESO, CUSO, WUSC), some have seen significant increases (CCI, SUCO), while others have experienced a modest decrease (CWY) or increase (Oxfam-Québec).

Note: CECI and WUSC still exist as separate organizations, but the funding they receive through VCP ($10.6M in 2004) is for Uniterra, and is lower than the total support the two organizations received in 1994/95 ($13.5M).

Snapshot of VCP supported volunteers (2004)[17]
VCAs that responded to our survey: 9
Number of placements overseas:
1,032 (CWY)
431 (CESO)
188 (CUSO)
145 (CECI)
100 (Oxfam-Québec)
52 (WUSC)
31 (CCI)
21 (AFS IC)
20 (SUCO)
11 (VSO Canada)
Number of placements in Canada:
536 (CWY)
13 (CCI)
4 (CUSO)
Number of South-South placements:
44 (CUSO)
3 (CCI)

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[17] Based on information provided by the VCAs in February 2005. No information received from SUCO.

[18] At the time of writing this report, CUSO is considering replacing its six Canadian regional offices by three out-based staff.

Exhibit 2.3   CPB Support for Volunteer Sending to Individual VCAs: 1994 and 2004

VCA Budgets in Millions

Performance and Knowledge Management Branch
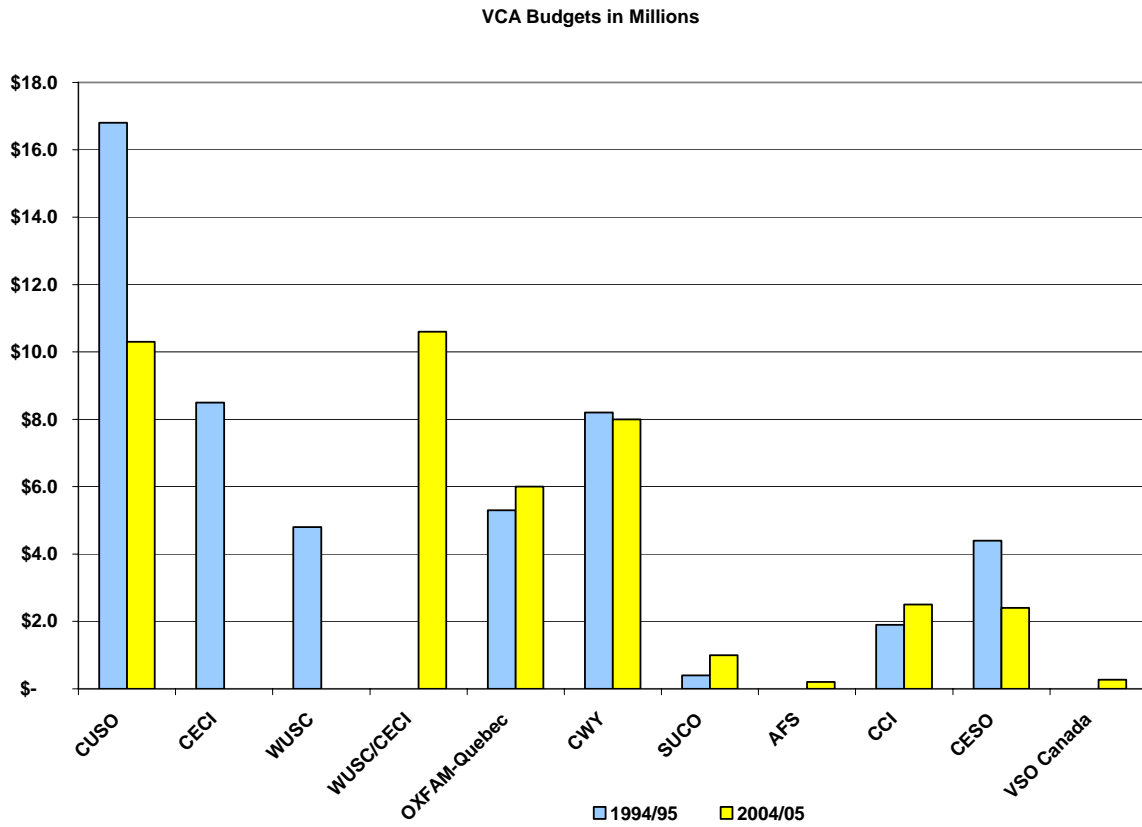
3. The Evolving Context for Volunteer Cooperation

3.1 Introduction

To set the stage for the analysis in the rest of this report, we have outlined some of the key changes in the international development and domestic contexts that have occurred in the past decade and that are of particular relevance to the VCP.

Key Milestones

A number of important events around the world and in Canada over the past 50 years have directly and indirectly affected volunteer cooperation programs (see Exhibit 3.1) and have implications that are discussed in the following sections of the report.

Exhibit 3.1   Key Milestones in the International and Canadian Context

YEAR	INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT		CANADIAN CONTEXT	VCP CONTEXT
1950s	Cold War Colombo Plan (1951)	Creation of DAC Creation of several VSAs (VSO, Peace Corps, etc.)	External Aid Office established within the Department of External Affairs (precursor of CIDA) 1960	Some volunteer sending by academic and religious organizations
1960s	African countries gain independence		Creation of CIDA (1968)	Creation of several Canadian VSAs[19] (CCI, CECI, CESO, CUSO, SUCO, WUSC)
1970s		Creation of UNV	Canada commits to increase ODA to 0.7% of GDP Growth in ODA	Significant growth in funding and programming for volunteer sending
1980s	Fall of Berlin Wall (1989)			NGOs eligible for country focus project funding
1990s		Structural Adjustment Policies Principles of Effective Development (1996)	Recession and record high deficits *Canada in the World* (1995)	CIDA funding cuts (CPB, NGOs) Voluntary Program Review 1992 VCP review commissioned by the VSAs in 1994 Volunteer Sending Framework for 1999-2004
2000 **2005**	September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on US	Millennium Development Goals	GoC and Canadian Voluntary Sector Accord - Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) (2001) HRDC Scandal Sponsorship Scandal PM Announces Canada Corps $3.4-billion foreign aid and debt relief over 5 years announced	CIDA Framework (RMAF, Sustainable Development Goals) Strengthening Aid Effectiveness (2002) Creation of VCP (2004) Review of VCP (2004-05)

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[19] Until recently, Volunteer Cooperation Agencies used to be called Volunteer Sending Agencies (VSAs).

The Power of Volunteering: A Review of the Canadian Volunteer Cooperation Program   22

3.2   International Context

Finding 4: The global development agenda emphasizes and acknowledges the critically important role of civil society engagement. All major international donors continue to invest in volunteer cooperation to support civil society engagement in the North and the South.

Several recent global initiatives (see sidebars) are having profound effects on the development community's support for international cooperation, reflected in how they are now actively aligning their policies, practices, programs and expenditures with the global development agenda. For example, bilateral and multilateral development agencies are taking major steps to untie aid and focus their investments in sectors and /or countries, and results-based approaches are becoming the norm rather than the exception. There is also a heightened emphasis on development outcomes.

These developments are having some important impacts on the role, needs and expectations of developing country institutions, organizations and civil society. Increasingly, government institutions and organizations in the South are expected to voice their needs and expectations and live up to their commitments, given broad acceptance of the principles of local ownership, improved donor coordination and stronger partnerships. Civil society needs to play an increasingly important role in developing countries in the wake of trends related to decentralization for program-based approaches such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and sector-wide approaches (SWAPs) to be effective.

This context increases the importance of initiatives aimed at strengthening civil society in the North and the South.
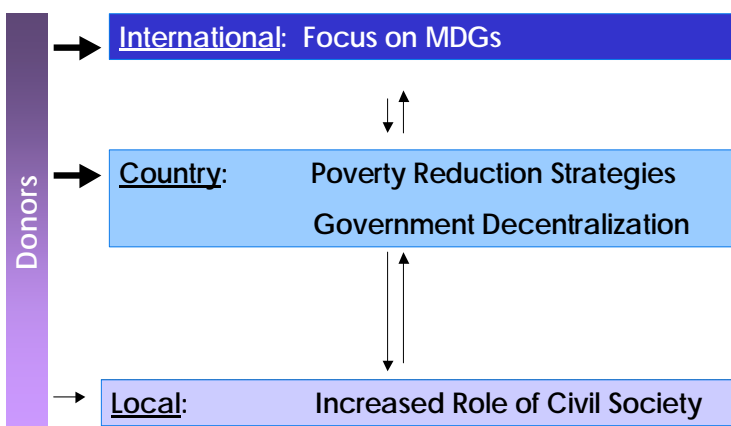
A review of other European countries indicates increased support for volunteer cooperation programs[21] for two major reasons. First, governments in the North are recognizing the importance of public

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Five Principles of Effective Development[20]

Local ownership

Improved donor coordination

Stronger partnerships

A results-based approach

Greater policy coherence

Other factors of central importance to the effective use of aid investments: Good governance, Building capacity, Engaging civil society

---

Millennium Development Goals (2000)

Eradicate poverty and hunger

Achieve universal primary education

Promote gender equality and empower women

Reduce child mortality

Improve maternal health

Combat HIV/IDS, malaria and other diseases

Ensure environmental sustainability

Develop a global partnership for development

Donors →

International: Focus on MDGs

↕

Country: Poverty Reduction Strategies
Government Decentralization

↕

Local: Increased Role of Civil Society

---

[20] *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation* (OECD, 1996) p.13-17

[21] A 2003 Danish study, *The Use of Personnel in Development Cooperation,* reports that in recent years financial support for volunteer programs has increased for six of nine major volunteer sending organizations in European countries and remained steady in three others. This excludes Denmark, which discontinued its volunteer cooperation program.

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support and engagement vis-à-vis ODA funding. The only European countries that avoided declines in ODA funding levels were those that informed the public about their development programs and provided justification for them (Denmark[22], Norway, Sweden and Switzerland). Volunteer cooperation and similar programs are viewed by some of these countries as an effective way of engaging their citizens, particularly politicians, in international development. Some believe that NGOs engaged in volunteer cooperation have a competitive advantage over other development agencies in raising public awareness and increasing public participation in policy development. Volunteering overseas is also seen as a form of public engagement and a way of developing social capital in the North and the South.

Second, given the readiness and ability of volunteers to work with civil society in the South, donors increasingly see such programs as an instrument for achieving development goals in the South, particularly in regard to civil society capacity building and strengthening. Moreover, such

> *Rooted in trust, voluntary action is an expression of social capital, the networks of social interaction and norms of reciprocity that allow the volunteer to assume some level of reciprocity within the community. Volunteering also generates new networks and norms, extending society's existing capital reservoirs by building new relationships and widening its webs of social interaction.*
>
> Below the Waterline of Public Visibility, UNV, 2000, p. 7

cooperation has the potential to contribute to the development of social capital and volunteer organizations in the South.

Finding 5: Globalization, coupled with the global development agenda, is having important effects on the supply and demand for volunteers, and on the modes and management of volunteer sending and cooperation.

Globalization has been the subject of considerable debate and discussion over the past couple of decades. While the term was originally used to refer to the growth in economic activities across borders (and its implications), the term has taken on other, broader cultural, political and environmental dimensions. Notwithstanding the ongoing debate regarding the effects of globalization on both the North and South, various aspects of globalization have had an impact on the supply and demand for volunteers.

The increase in global media coverage, the advance of accessible information and communications technologies (ICT), as well as increased access to inexpensive travel, have fuelled interest in and awareness of world events such as the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak, September 11, the war in Iraq, and the recent Asian tsunami (2004). Interest and awareness are further reinforced by global migration, global consumerism patterns, and changing demographics within nations.

Globalization is fueling the **interest of individuals in international volunteerism.** The purposes for becoming a volunteer can be different (educational, personal development, international development, philanthropic, religious, etc.), and the distinction between volunteer cooperation programs and other types of volunteering are often blurred. This can lead to negative consequences for those involved when there is insufficient understanding or appreciation of

> **Volunteers' interest in tsunami relief operations in Asia**
>
> *When you are talking about emergency disasters of this size and scope, it's something that you really need to think twice about before spontaneously going over there to offer to help. If you've had no training and experience in dealing with traumatic situations, it probably isn't a very good idea. We never send spontaneous volunteers to do relief work overseas.*
>
> Suzanne Charest, Canadian Red Cross
>
> Globe and Mail (p.T2) January 15, 2005

the requirements for volunteer selection, screening, and orientation (see sidebar).

Globalization is also creating **public interest in international development**. In the wake of the 2004 Asian tsunami, the phenomenal levels of interest, financial and advocacy support by individuals and

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[22] While Denmark's ODA remained high, its volunteer cooperation program was cut.

organizations around the world demonstrated the potential influence of civil society on governments. While some lament the "event-based" support for international development in response to a crisis, there are positive signs of increased public discussion of the complexity of international development, and the need for long-term support –such as meeting the United Nations Official Development Assistance (ODA) target of 0.7% Gross National Income (GNI). As noted above, there appears to be support by international development agencies to harness public interest and support for international development.

Our review of the literature, complemented by interview data, suggests that globalization is having several important effects on both the **supply of volunteers and the demand for volunteer sending and cooperation**, as noted in Exhibit 3.2. Overall, interest in volunteering abroad is high, and is increasingly popular among older, more affluent individuals who initiate and are prepared to pay their own way for the experience.

Exhibit 3.2   Global Changes in the Supply and Demand for Volunteers

SUPPLY	DEMAND
Increased interest by individuals to volunteer, often in response to environmental disasters (e.g. Tsunami)	Increasing demand for experienced, specialized "professional" volunteers
Increased supply of increasingly older and more experienced volunteers (except for youth programs), who are interested in short term, as opposed to long term, placements	Increasing demand for Southern volunteers who have a deeper appreciation of the context
Increased willingness and ability of individuals to pay for the privilege of volunteering	Growing shortage of skilled human resources in some regions (e.g. due to the impact of AIDS in Africa) is renewing demands for stop-gap measures such as human resources replacement – which were common in the 1960s and 1970s but had virtually disappeared by the 1980s
Increased diversity in the background of volunteers (ethnic origins, country of origin)	
	Increasing interest in some Southern countries in establishing their own domestic volunteer agencies

Globalization has also affected the **modes of volunteering**. While previously VCAs tended to dominate the management of such activities in any one country, today, there is much greater diversity (see sidebar). Relatively new organizations, such as Engineers Without Borders, are springing up and sending professionals overseas to build capacities.

VCA approaches: For the most part, volunteer cooperation agencies (VCAs) are embracing change and identifying ways to increase the impact of their

> **Changes in the Modes of Volunteering**
>
> Increasingly varied actors involved in volunteering (e.g. private sector, clubs, church groups, professional associations, individuals)
>
> Increased diversity of modes of volunteering including vacation volunteering, internships, self-initiated independent volunteering

development programs by moving away from ad hoc individual placements toward more strategic, demand-driven and program-focused approaches (e.g. concentrated country or sector programs). Many have adopted capacity development approaches in order to support enhanced sustainability of results.

Government support for volunteer sending: In recent years, several donors undertook reviews of their volunteer sending programs. While all major donors continue to support volunteer sending programs, the outcome of these reviews has varied: merger with the government (APSO) in Ireland, restructuring (Fredskorpset) in Norway, or discontinuation of government support in Denmark. In other cases, it has led to longer-term agreements (UK, Australia) or changes in strategic focus.

Changes in VCA programming: As shown in Exhibit 3.3, volunteer cooperation programming has evolved significantly over the past 40 years. VCAs have adapted how they respond to identified developing country needs, moving away from traditional approaches that supplied individual Northern volunteers to Southern organizations for fixed time periods (e.g. two or three years). They now respond through a myriad of multi-directional placements, multi-dimensional associations and partnerships, and increasing diversity in the types of support provided, duration of placements and associations (see sidebar).

> **Changes in VCA programming** [23]
>
> **Multi-directional placements**: includes North-South; South-North; South-South; and domestic volunteering
>
> **Multi-dimensional associations and partnerships**: includes VCAs-DCOs; Northern civil society organizations and Southern DCOs or networks; VCAs and Northern partners
>
> **Multiple types of resources**: increasing support for non-volunteer activities, such as the costs associated with other capacity development initiatives (e.g. costs of workshops, consultants, equipment purchases, small project support, etc.)
>
> **Duration**: Individual placements from 2 weeks to several years; associations and partnerships from several years to decades

Most agencies are increasing their emphasis on developmental outcomes (planning, tracking and reporting) – to demonstrate the effectiveness of their work to their stakeholders. Finally, there is heightened awareness of and attention to becoming more effective in harnessing the energy, commitment and support of returned volunteers, particularly in regard to domestic public engagement agendas.

Exhibit 3.3 Evolution of Volunteer Cooperation over Time [24]

ELEMENT	DECADE				
	1960s	**1970s**	**1980s**	**1990s**	**2000s**
Roles	Doers	Mobilizers	Catalysts/ Supporters	Allies/Partners	Allies/Partners
Program Label	Volunteer sending		Volunteer Sending Volunteer Cooperation		Volunteer Cooperation
Approach	Service delivery by Northern volunteers in the South	Focus on community development in the South	Support to Southern NGOS as key actors	Alliance building and networking Organizational strengthening of Southern organizations	Global alliance building and networking Solidarity-reciprocity Capacity Development of DCOs
Partnership Timeframes	Short-term to 2 years	Life of the project	3-5 years	Long term	Long term
Development paradigm	Smiling faces going places	Root causes Basic needs	Sustainable / participatory development	Participation and Democratization	Globalization
Emphasis on Public engagement	Fund-raising charity	Increasing emphasis on development education		Emphasis reduced by 1995, replaced by emphasis on development outcomes	Increasing emphasis on public engagement since 2003/04

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[23] See glossary for definitions of these terms

[24] Analysis informed by David Korten in *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*, 1990.

Finding 6: **Capacity development has been widely adopted as an important strategy to support aid effectiveness and sustainable development. However, capacity development is a relatively new and evolving field, and the onus is on organizations that have adopted this approach to keep themselves abreast of new developments in order to maximize their effectiveness.**

As noted in a recent publication of the UNDP [25] changing understanding and attitudes in North-South relations is mirrored in the vocabulary that is used by the development community. In the 1960s the way to conceive and design development interventions was summed up in the concept of "technical assistance." Underlying this expression was the notion that rich Northern countries had a monopoly on knowledge. In the 1970s the development community started to refer to "technical cooperation" as a way to re-establish some balance in the North-South relationship. In the 1980s and 1990s the concept of "capacity development" emerged as a key concept of development aid and was widely recognized as its main goal. The basic ideas behind the concept of capacity development (CD) are "that capacities exist in developing countries and need to be developed" and "that development strategies do not have to, and indeed should not, be imported from outside." [26]

> **UNDP's Experience with Capacity Development**
>
> Ten principles to inspire ownership, transform leadership, and help ensure capacity development
>
> 1. Don't rush.
> 2. Respect the value system and foster self-esteem.
> 3. Scan locally and globally; reinvent locally.
> 4. Challenge mindsets and power differentials.
> 5. Think and act in terms of sustainable capacity outcomes.
> 6. Establish positive incentives.
> 7. Integrate external inputs into national priorities, processes and systems.
> 8. Build on existing capacities rather than creating new ones.
> 9. Stay engaged under difficult circumstances.
> 10. Remain accountable to ultimate beneficiaries.
>
> *Ownership, Leadership and Transformation – Can We Do Better for Capacity Development?*, UNDP (2003)

Many development organizations, including those engaged in volunteer cooperation, now reflect this CD perspective prominently in their organizational vision and/or objectives statements, and a growing number of donor projects identify capacity development as a project strategy or objective. CD is also identified in the *Principles of Development Effectiveness* (OECD, 1996) as a factor of central importance to the effective use of aid investments.

Although many organizations, including organizations engaged in volunteer cooperation, have been adopting a CD approach, they vary considerably in their understanding of, and approach to, CD. Definitions and expected results vary, as do preferred entry levels (see sidebar). Some organizations have pushed their thinking quite far and, based on their

> **Some ongoing questions about CD [27]**
>
> Is capacity development a process or an objective?
>
> What entry levels are appropriate (sector, institution, organization, individual) for capacity development initiatives and what are the inter-relationships among the levels?
>
> What are realistic, achievable results of capacity development initiatives?

---

[25] *Ownership, Leadership and Transformation – Can We Do Better for Capacity Development?*, Lopes, C. and Theisohn, T., UNDP, Earthscan (2003)

[26] Ibid, p. xii

[27] *Capacity Development: Why, What and How* in CIDA Capacity Development Occasional Series, Bolger, J. CIDA (2000) p.35

acquired experience with CD, have adopted a more systematic and holistic approach to this work. Others are in earlier stages of development, and are still evolving models, frameworks, systems and tools.

CD is a rapidly evolving field and, true to its principles, one that is building on the experience of its practitioners, recognizes the need to adapt to local circumstances, and accepts that it will take time to get it right. Given the increased adoption of capacity development as an approach to international development, it is incumbent on all stakeholders to keep up-to-date and share their experience with other practitioners in order to ensure increased effectiveness of capacity development programs. This is of particular importance to agencies involved in volunteer cooperation since they have recently embraced a capacity development approach in their support of developing country partners.

3.3   Canadian Context

Finding 7:   Canada is in the midst of a foreign policy review. While policy directions have yet to be announced, it appears that there will be increased emphasis and support for the active involvement of Canadians in international cooperation. This presents an important opportunity for Canada to clarify its position regarding international volunteering.

Canada's current foreign policy statement *Canada in the World* dates back to 1995. At the time of writing, the Canadian government was in the process of preparing an International Policy Statement (IPS), which will update Canada's foreign policy priorities. Until the IPS is released, there is some uncertainty regarding future directions, priorities and roles of Canadian government departments and agencies, including CIDA. However, indications are that the policy statement will clarify Canada's desired "niche" in the world.

Recent public announcements suggest that the IPS will emphasize the importance of engaging Canadians in international development. The creation of the Canada Corps Initiative in 2004 suggests that the government will be placing increased value on ways and means to demonstrate Canada's commitment to global development by involving individual Canadians actively in global arenas, be it through Canadian peacekeepers, observers at elections, or volunteers. This initiative supplements Canada's long-established previous commitments including the Volunteer

> *Canada has long been recognized as a leading voice in the world for democracy, pluralism, human rights and the rule of law. Groups and individuals from across the country are already sharing their expertise in these areas with the world. Canada Corps will bring new focus and energy to what is already being done, and more effectively match the skills and talents of Canadians – including youth - to help nurture democracy and the rule of law in fragile states in the future.*
>
> Prime Minister Martin, May 10, 2004

Cooperation Program (and its precursors) and the YES Youth Internship Programs described in section 2.0.

The existence of these various programs indicates that the Canadian government recognizes the value of international volunteer cooperation and is willing to support Canadian engagement for different purposes and in different ways. Moreover, the active involvement of several

> The Canada Corps Initiative is new and evolving, while other programs are more established. A common guiding statement or strategy would encourage the clarification of program niches and help avoid duplication among programs.

government departments in some of these programs positively reinforces the Canadian government's increasing emphasis on the whole of government approach. This is an important opportunity for the government to explain Canada's overall goals and rationale for volunteer cooperation and clarify how each program contributes to the achievement of the goal. (This is discussed in section 4.5.2.)

Finding 8: There is growing interest by Canadians to be engaged internationally. This presents important opportunities for organizations involved in public engagement.

The expected emphasis in the upcoming IPS reflects the growing interest by Canadians to be engaged internationally. As is happening around the world, the previously noted effects of globalization fuel Canadians' interest in international cooperation. Recent evidence of this includes Canadian financial support (over $500 million)[28] and citizen interest following the Asian tsunami – some VCAs interviewed for this study indicated that they were inundated by requests from individual Canadians to volunteer in countries affected by the tsunami. There is also an increase in enrollment in international development study programs across Canadian universities. Moreover a recent EKOS survey[29] indicates that a growing number of Canadians (from 42% to 59% since 1994) feel that Canada needs to maintain its aid program to poor countries, despite problems and poverty in Canada.

At the same time, however, survey data and other analysis suggests that Canadians' interest tends to be driven by events (e.g. natural disasters, terrorism) and that their support is relatively volatile.[30] Many feel that there is an important need to deepen Canadians' understanding about and support for international development, which is generally viewed as superficial.

> **Canadians' knowledge and understanding about development**
>
> *Despite interest in international affairs, Canadians have a limited knowledge of the facts.* Innovative Research Group, Visions of Canadian Foreign Policy: Conference Report, November 4, 2004
>
> *While Canadians agree that development assistance is important, their support remains shallow, unmatched by a commitment to take concrete action.* Alain Noel, Jean Philippe Therien and Sébastien Dallaire, Divided over Internationalism: the Canadian Public and Development Assistance, University of Montreal, 2003 p.2

However, Canadians are becoming more sophisticated. For instance, in a recent survey,[31] 71% of respondents identified fairer international trade policies as an effective way of reducing poverty in the South. Many feel that a deeper understanding by Canadians would increase their support for Government of Canada's development priorities.

> **Canadian support for ODA**
>
> *Canadians are more than ever engaged in the world, prepared to work abroad, and see engagement as key to Canadian prosperity.* Engaging Canadians as Active Global Citizens, CCIC, 2004 p.5
>
> *A majority (78%) of Canadians support Canada's aid program.* Canadian Attitudes Toward Development Assistance, Environics Research Group, 2004
>
> *75% of Canadians believe that what happens in the rest of the world affects their daily life.* Innovative Research Group, Visions of Canadian Foreign Policy: Conference Report, November 4, 2004

The current context presents important opportunities for the Canadian government and others to harness Canadian interest in international development through support for public engagement.

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[28] Rethinking Government 2004, Wave 5 Report, EKOS Research Associates Inc, February 2005, p.22.

[29] ibid

[30] Canadian Attitudes Toward Development Assistance: A Survey, Environics Research Group, 2004

[31] Ibid

Finding 9: **Concerns about government accountability in the past few years have led to increasingly risk-averse behaviours and increased demand for information to respond to accountability requirements, possibly at the expense of effective programming.**

Managing for results and responsible spending are two of the four areas critical to a well-performing public sector – according to *Results for Canadians* (2000), the Government of Canada's (GoC) management framework aimed at developing and supporting excellence in Canadian government management practices.

In the past few years, events such as the HRDC and sponsorship program scandals have put additional pressure on the government to account for public spending. This is having immediate and far-reaching administrative implications for Canadian government departments and the organizations they support.

> *Management in all departments, agencies and functions must be focused on the achievement of results and reporting them in simple and understandable ways to elected officials and to Canadians.*
>
> *The costs of initiatives must be linked with results to ensure value for the taxpayer. Programs and ...proposals must be systematically assessed and management frameworks must be in place to ensure due diligence and proper stewardship of public funds.*
>
> Results for Canadians (TBS, 2000)

Requests for access to information have multiplied, resulting in increased administrative burdens for government departments as well as for those that receive funding from government. Government departments are increasingly anxious and concerned about accountability requirements, resulting in an increased number of audits, evaluations, reports and demands for other types of information on expenditures, inputs and activities (e.g. CIDA is starting to require NGOs to maintain time tracking systems, and to report on time utilization). This puts considerable pressure on many financially vulnerable organizations in the South, the ultimate recipients of CIDA's funding, which have the least capacity to respond to these requirements. While it is understandable that government requires certain types of information for accountability purposes, at times, there is an imbalance between the demand for accountability and performance information.[32] Such imbalances consume government and others alike, reducing the time available to assemble and analyze information needed for decision-making and effective programming.

3.4   CIDA and CPB Context

Finding 10: In positioning itself in the new development context, CPB faces the challenge of simultaneously aligning itself with CIDA priorities and harnessing the contributions of its diverse constituency, Canadian civil society.

CIDA shares the global development community's long-term vision of sustainable development captured in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Like other donors, CIDA also endorses key principles of aid effectiveness and has explicitly recognized the importance of a number of other cross-cutting factors in its approach to sustainable development including: good governance, building capacity to ensure progress is sustained after donor countries have left, and engaging civil society to help meet the needs of the people and ensure local ownership at the grassroots level. The Agency's Key Agency Results (KARs), established in the Agency RMAF in January 2002, serve as a framework for integrated, results-based planning, budgeting and reporting, and reflect the Agency's medium and long-term priorities.

In the past few years, CIDA has been actively reviewing and revising its approaches to development in order to increase coherence between its actions, stated priorities and commitments. In this context, CIDA has been reviewing the role and added-value of the Canadian voluntary sector and private sector partners

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[32] Hall, Michael et al., Assessing Performance: Evaluation Practices & Perspectives in Canada's Voluntary Sector, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Centre for Voluntary Sector Research, 2003.

in Canada's ODA program, as well as the rationale for collaboration.[33] CIDA is also engaged in identifying ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its collaboration with such partners so that they can be more supportive of the aid effectiveness principles, policy coherence and local ownership.

These reflections have particular implications for CIDA's Canadian Partnership Branch (CPB), which historically has supported the initiatives of Canadian partners in keeping with its mission. The adoption of *Strengthening Aid Effectiveness* (including the emphasis on developmental outcomes) raised questions about the role and activities of CPB, which CIDA has not yet addressed.[34]

CPB has undertaken measures to ensure that its investments are more clearly linked to the MDGs.[35] The Branch has also indicated that it is moving towards other programming approaches that will foster local ownership as well as engagement of Canadian civil society in development. These will be reflected in the Agency's 2010 Vision statement.

CPB funding has declined over the past ten years [36] (see Exhibit 3.4), while multilateral and bilateral program budgets have increased. This has added to CPB's challenges in responding to the global development agenda in the past few years. Unlike CIDA's bilateral and multilateral branches, CPB has a dual role – it must design programs that align with CIDA's corporate priorities (and enter into agreements for their delivery), and is also responsible for engaging with Canadian civil society and harnessing the contributions of this diverse constituency in support of international cooperation and Canada's ODA objectives. Therefore, it cannot be just directive and contractual, but must also be facilitative and enabling. This has various ongoing political, programming and resource implications (both programming funds and program management resources) for the Branch that need to be corporately understood, managed and addressed.

> **CPB Vision:** Civil society and the private sector in Canada and in host countries are key contributors to international development. They are agents of change, introduce new thinking in development, and provide direct benefits to people. Development is a "non-linear" process that occurs through civil society and the private sector, as well as through governments and international organizations.
>
> **Mission:** To support CIDA's mandate and objectives through partnerships with civil society and the private sector in Canada and in host countries.
>
> Cited from CIDA web site

> CIDA's contribution to the GoC Expenditure Review includes reductions to the budgets of Development Information Program, Policy Branch and the Canadian Partnerships Branch as they focus work more exclusively on the Millennium Development Goals and on least developed countries.
>
> CIDA web site February 25, 2005

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[33] Sustainable Development Strategy 2004-2006 (CIDA, 2004), p.76

[34] For example, in *Strengthening Aid Effectiveness* most of the implications relate to CIDA's bilateral programming; there is no explicit attention paid to CPB programs. The SAE document itself noted that separate statements would be required of Canadian Partnership and Multilateral Branches.

[35] This was, for example, one of the driving forces behind the creation of the Volunteer Cooperation Program.

[36] From CIDA Departmental Performance Reports to Parliament for the years 1994/95 until 2003/4. Data for 2004/05 is drawn from the Report on Plans and Priorities 2005.

Exhibit 3.4 CIDA Expenditures by Programs (1994-2005)

In Millions

Legend: Canadian Partnership ◆ — Geographic Programs ■ — Multilateral Programs ▲
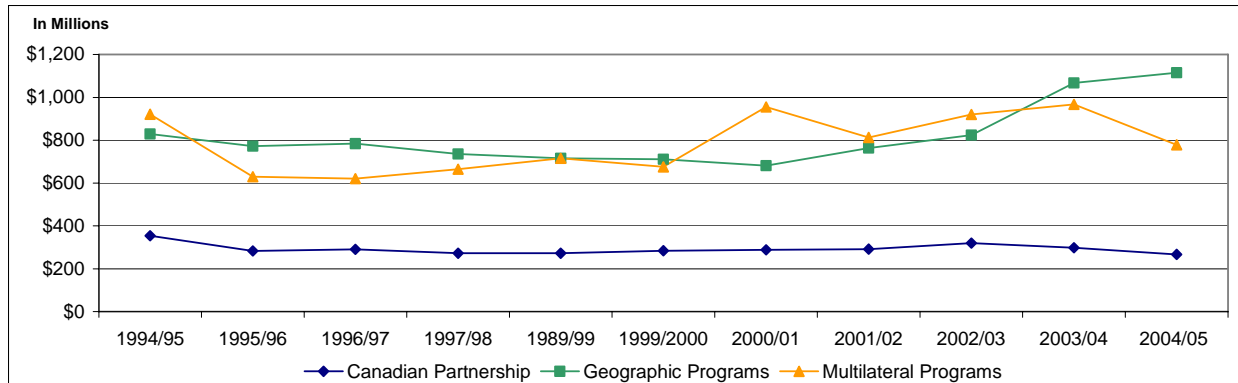
Finding 11: CIDA's support for Canadian public engagement has been inconsistent over time. The current context presents an important opportunity for supporting such programs.

Support for engaging Canadians in international affairs is evident in Canada's foreign policy statements (see sidebar) as well as in CIDA's strategy and policy statements over the past ten years. In 1999, CIDA launched a public engagement strategy and action plan with a goal to "secure public understanding, sustained support and informed action by Canadians on international cooperation (CIDA, 1999). The expected results were defined as follows:

> *The projection of Canadian values and culture is important to our success in the World...Canadian foreign policy should celebrate and promote Canadian culture as an important way of advancing our interest in international affairs.* Canada in the World (DFAIT, 1995 p.ii)
>
> *Engaged Canadians[37]: CIDA is revising its corporate Strategic Communications Framework...which will guide the development of more specific plans to promote better understanding and support for international development among Canadians...CIDA's partners can effectively mobilize public and youth through their work with volunteers...* CIDA's Sustainable Development Strategy 2004-06 (CIDA, 2004 p. 31-32)

- More Canadians are able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of global issues and international cooperation,

- Canadians consistently support Canada's role and investments in international cooperation, and

- Canadians increasingly engage in a wide variety of informed actions designed to support international cooperation.

While CPB's latest vision statement refers to the importance of engaging Canadians, there has been limited support (financial and human resources) provided for such objectives since CIDA's Public Participation Program ended ten years ago (see sidebar). Moreover, the increased emphasis on principles

> PPP had a budget of approximately $11 million when it was closed in 1995. The Public Engagement Strategy and Action Plan led to the establishment of a Stand Alone Public Engagement Fund with an annual budget of $500,000 as well as some modest support ($50,000 per year) to each of seven regional and provincial councils. The Agency (CPB Branch) currently has one officer whose responsibilities include, among other things, public engagement. CIDA has instead relied on its partners to engage Canadians as part of their programming activities, without providing any specific financial support for same.

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[37] Engaged Canadians is one of the five enabling results identified in CIDA's Sustainable Development Strategy

of aid effectiveness (including the emphasis on development over other outcomes) created some ambiguity regarding CIDA's commitment to public engagement.

However, there is evidence that the tide is shifting in government circles in favour of more explicit support for Canadian public engagement.

> Some feel that CIDA has been more interested in public relations agendas, aimed at building support for Canada's international development program,[38] than in creating a greater understanding of development and supporting the development of global citizens.

CIDA (under the leadership of CPB's Agency Services and Canadian Relations Division) is in the process of developing a new public engagement strategy to replace the one launched in 1999. The Prime Minister's recent announcement and subsequent creation of the Canada Corps initiative in 2004 implies increased support for public engagement strategies. This is reinforced by the tremendous interest and support by Canadians about global issues and events. While support for public education appears considerably more solid than it has in a long time, there are continued concerns, questions and some skepticism regarding the objectives, nature and duration of CIDA's support given its mixed historical record on this issue.

Finding 12: CPB has made a concerted effort to enhance its overall management in the past five years. The benefits of the audit are already quite visible in VCP management practices.

In the past five years, CIDA and CPB have taken several steps to adapt to the changing global developmental agenda, and to enhance the effectiveness and the efficiency of CPB. These have included a Branch re-organization (2003-04), visioning exercises, several Program reviews, and an internal audit of the Voluntary Sector Program.

For example, in September 2003, Performance Review Branch conducted an internal audit to determine whether contribution and grant agreements issued and managed by the Voluntary Sector Program in CPB were in compliance with the Financial Administration Act (and associated Acts), Treasury Board regulations and policies (including the Policy on Transfer Payments), and CIDA and Branch policies, directives and guidelines.[39] The Audit concluded that while the Voluntary Sector Program generally managed grant and contribution agreements in compliance with relevant policies, the Program required improvements in internal systems and procedures used to manage grants and contributions in order to demonstrate full compliance with the policies of Treasury Board and CIDA. More specifically, the audit suggested the following:

- creation and publication of program frameworks and assessment criteria for the funding mechanisms that did not already have published criteria,

- writing of procedures for due diligence in the examination of proposals,

- establishment of account verification procedures, and

- development of a risk-based approach for the selection of recipients for financial audits.

As part of its response to the audit, CPB launched several internal task forces (see sidebar) and, at the time of writing, work was well underway in each area. VCP staff are keeping the VCAs informed about the recommendations of these task forces. Overall, theses measures are aimed at enhancing the Branch's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency given the

> **CPB Task Forces**
>
> Due Diligence Task Force
>
> Cost-sharing Working Group
>
> Strategic Planning Working Group
>
> Financial Management Task Force

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[38] See for example New Horizons: Engaging Canadians as active global citizens (CCIC, 2004)

[39] Internal Audit Report Contributions and Grant Agreements managed by CIDA's Voluntary Sector Program (CIDA, 2004)

changing context. There are indications that these measures are having some positive returns. Interviews suggest that several of the initiatives are helping to clarify Branch expectations of partners, clarify partner accountabilities, and increase transparency of Branch requirements with current and potential partners. This has been evident in the processes used by CPB to enter into new agreements with each of the VCAs in 2004.

3.5 VCA Context

Finding 13: Some fundamental shifts in the management, governance and strategic directions of VCAs in the past five to ten years are bringing new energy, experience, and ways of working in the sector, and are increasing the respect for VCAs.

Many of those interviewed for this review noted significant positive changes in how the VCAs are being managed, how their performance is being monitored by their Boards, how they are interacting with CIDA – as well as the overall level of respect for VCAs (see sidebar). Interviews with CIDA and the Executive Directors of the reviewed VCAs, complemented by document reviews, indicate important strategic changes in these organizations.

VCA Executive Directors today have more diverse backgrounds and experience than 10-20 years ago. Several VCAs (e.g. CCI, CUSO, WUSC) deliberately sought external candidates from other walks of life (government, private sector, political and domestic civil society) to bring new perspectives and experience to their agencies. Some of the current Executive Directors have served as international volunteers.

Several VCAs have made or are making significant changes to their governance structures to enhance and/or clarify accountabilities, and several have undertaken major strategic shifts (e.g. CCI re-focusing; the emergence of Uniterra and the merger of Oxfam-Québec and OCSD).

> **Increasing Respect for VCAs**
>
> The Executive Directors of these (VCAs) are seasoned individuals, sought after by government, the UN. They carry a lot of weight…Moreover their Boards are strong…and they are able to deal with these strong Boards.
>
> Interviewed CIDA representative

> **New Strategic Directions**
>
> In July 2004, the Montreal-based CECI and Ottawa-based WUSC joined forces and combined their expertise to implement a major international voluntary cooperation program. Baptized Uniterra, this joint program seeks to help reduce poverty in the world and to help achieve the UN's Millennium Development Goals. (CECI web site Feb/2005)
>
> In 2000 CCI began the process of reinventing itself to transform from the focus on cross-cultural exchanges to an international development organization focused on sustainable development in 15 partner countries. (CCI web site Feb/2005)

Finally, the relationship among VCAs has changed dramatically in the past three years, partly fueled by some common challenges, and reinforced by changes in the leaders of the VCAs. As a consequence, there is increased transparency, trust and collaboration among these organizations, which has helped them develop a common voice and a more effective relationship with CIDA (see also section 4.5.4).

4. Developmental Performance

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the review findings on the performance of VCP in terms of its results (for DCOs, Canadian public engagement, and returned volunteers) and from the perspective of selected CIDA key success factors: relevance, sustainability, partnership and cost-effectiveness.

4.2 DCO Results

4.2.1 Study Background

The DCO study examined the volunteer cooperation activities of three VCAs: CECI, CUSO and Oxfam-Québec. It focused on the capacity building results on their partner DCOs in four countries, namely Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Vietnam.

The review team examined capacity building results by looking at three broad areas:

- impacts on the motivation of DCOs (beliefs, values, attitude/outlook and vision/mission),

- impacts on the organizational capacities of DCOs (knowledge, skills/abilities, systems, linkages),

- impacts on the organizational performance of DCOs (relevance and reach, efficiency and effectiveness, viability).

A profile of the 23 DCOs reviewed is included in Appendix IV. Selected characteristics of the DCOs reviewed are summarized below.

DCO raison d'être: The work of the DCOs supported by the VCAs focuses primarily on addressing the economic, social or political/human rights needs of the poor, both urban and rural.

Gender: For most of the DCOs reviewed (20), gender equality and addressing the imbalance in gender relations is a significant concern. Such a high level of concern with gender within this sample of DCOs should not be surprising since all three VCAs have gender equality as an area of programming priority and in some countries are reported to be playing a leadership role (e.g. the Canadian Ambassador to Burkina Faso spoke highly of the work of Oxfam-Québec in this regard).

DCO Raison d'être

DCOs work in the economic, social and political/basic human rights spheres with various poor rural and urban communities.

Support in the **economic sphere** generally involves the strengthening of groups of small-scale producers (e.g. women artisans, shea butter producers, farmers groups), the provision of micro-credit, small-scale infrastructure projects, etc.

Support in the **social sphere** involves working through community groups to address issues of literacy, basic health and sanitation, combating HIV/AIDS, etc.

In the **political/human rights sphere**, the focus is on ensuring the rights of minorities and women, the empowerment of women, and elimination of violence against women.

Gender

Of the DCOs reviewed, eight are either Community Based Organizations (CBOs) constituted of primarily women members (e.g. groups of women who are small-scale producers or artisans) or organizations focused primarily on gender/women's rights and empowerment, and/or gender based violence. Eight others address gender as a cross-cutting theme in their programs. Four have programs dealing specifically with gender or target the special issues and needs of women.

Types of DCOs: Generally the VCAs have focused their volunteer cooperation interventions with civil society organizations such as NGOs (including NGO networks and councils) and CBOs, usually apex level CBOs (i.e. umbrella organizations). Of the countries reviewed in this study, the exception to this is Vietnam which remains a

communist state with at best an incipient civil society. There are no civil society organizations per se, but Mass Organizations (MO) that are linked to the Communist Party and are part of the state apparatus. Such MOs provide a means to mobilize as well as connect with grassroots communities. VCAs in Vietnam have had to work primarily with government and mass organizations. In order to reach the poorer and more needy segments of the rural population, VCAs have focused much of their work at the local level, working with provincial governments, and district and commune level government units.

DCO Maturity Levels: With a few exceptions, the civil society DCOs (NGOs and CBOs) that were reviewed in this study were established between 1991 and 1999. They are still, for the most part, in the growth period of their organizational life and in need of strengthening themselves and their programs. In Vietnam, most of the organizations involved in the VCP have been in existence for longer but are dealing with new challenges and responsibilities as part of the decentralization to local government.

Focus and nature of VCA-DCO relationships: In any one country, VCAs focus their interventions in a couple of sectors/programs. VCAs usually work with a number of DCOs within the same sector to develop a coherent program of intervention. The VCA and DCOs enter into longer term partnerships (five years or more) that usually involve a series of volunteers (mostly long term but also short term), each addressing specific needs of the DCO. The placement of volunteers remains an important part of their capacity building interventions, but is only one aspect of a multi-faceted approach. Other forms of support include: counsel and advice provided by the VCA field representatives; helping to secure or leverage additional financial resources; and facilitating inter-organizational links with other DCOs in their country, with regional and global networks, as well as with Canadian civil society organizations dealing with similar issues.

> **Multi-partner placements**
>
> In some instances, when several DCOs share a common need, a volunteer may work out of the VCA country office and provide support to all the DCOs.
>
> Oxfam-Québec is using this type of placement in Vietnam and Burkina Faso, where for example an organisational development advisor or information technology advisor operates out of the field office and supports a number of partner DCOs.
>
> CECI also has used this format in Burkina Faso, for example, in its program to support producers groups involved in the production and marketing of shea butter.

4.2.2 Achievements

Finding 14: VCAs and their volunteers have had significant positive effects on the motivation, capacities and performance of DCOs reviewed.

DCOs reviewed as part of this study were overwhelmingly positive in their assessment of the impact of volunteer cooperation activities on their organizations. As Exhibit 4.1 reveals, 70% or more of the DCOs reviewed speak of positive impacts on their organizations in most of the results areas.

> Exhibit 4.1 provides a synthesis of impacts that recurred most often. Additional details are found in Appendix XIX, which includes 22 different kinds of results explicitly identified during data collection.

Most VCA-DCO relationships (78%) involved more than one volunteer, and also included other forms of support such as those outlined in 4.2.1 above.

It is important to note that the DCOs were speaking of the overall impact of their relationship with the VCA – they were not claiming that every volunteer placement achieved this level of results. A few volunteer placements did not work out as planned. For example, in one placement that was planned to support two DCOs, the amount of work required with both organizations was not feasible, and one of the DCOs had to wait for a second volunteer to be recruited. In another instance, there was an incompatibility of vision between a DCO Executive Director and a strong-willed volunteer, which led to an earlier than planned termination. Overall, however, problems were few, and the DCOs that experienced difficulties still spoke highly of the positive contributions of volunteer cooperation activities.

Exhibit 4.1 Summary Profile of Reported Results on DCOs

TYPE OF RESULTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF DCOS BY COUNTRY					% OF TOTAL
	BOLIVIA	BURKINA FASO	GHANA	VIETNAM	TOTAL	
	6	**6**	**4**	**7**	**23**	100
	Number of DCOs that reported positive results					
DCO Motivation						
Individual: work ethic	3	2	2	5	12	52
Individual: sense of shared struggle/solidarity	3	5	2	2	12	52
Organizational: greater clarity of vision and/or sounding board to manager(s)	3	4	4	5	16	70
Organizational: inter-organizational solidarity/reciprocity	3	6	2	7	18	78
DCO Capacities						
Individual: transfer of skills and experience	5	6	4	7	22	96
Organizational: New program administrative systems/tools/approaches	5	6	4	6	21	91
Organizational: Helped make linkages with regional or global networks and/or with new funders	3	6	3	5	17	74
DCO Performance						
Organizational: New programs and/or expanded reach of programs	4	5	4	7	20	87
Organizational: Increased visibility/credibility and/or viability	4	5	3	5	17	74

Finding 15: VCAs are achieving significant results in the area of DCO motivation at both the individual staff member level as well as the organizational level.

As a result of time and circumstances, the review team was not able to meet with many volunteer counterparts or other staff members, but was able to meet with the DCO Executive Directors and senior managers directly responsible for volunteers. These Executive Directors and senior managers shared several positive and important observations. They noted that the presence and commitment of volunteers had a positive impact on staff self-confidence, and reduced their sense of isolation by helping them to see themselves as part of a common struggle and a global movement of solidarity. DCO representatives spoke highly of the maturity, professionalism and dedication that volunteers brought to their work, and noted that their sense of responsibility had a positive impact on the work ethic of the DCO staff. In the few instances when DCO staff members were involved in the data collection, they confirmed the above findings.

At the organizational level, representatives of 16 out of 23 DCOs (70%) indicated that the volunteers helped the DCO become clearer about its vision and/or program strategy, or acted as a sounding board to help them think through specific issues or challenges. An even larger number (78%) noted that the volunteers

> Oxfam-Québec volunteer Francine Gagné helped ECAM, a Bolivian NGO, understand the legal and social aspects of family violence. The community had to be involved: police had to be trained, people had to be made aware of their rights, judges and lawyers had to be made aware and sensitive to these issues.
>
> *"Francine brought to ECAM her professional competence and experience. She did this while always respecting our mores and the systems that are in place."*
>
> Lourdes Aguilar, Director of ECAM

helped the organizations appreciate that they were not alone, but part of a larger, global movement trying to overcome poverty and injustice.

Finding 16: VCAs are contributing to DCO capacity through the transfer of specific skills and know-how, and the introduction of program/project management and administration approaches, tools and systems.

Of the 23 DCOs reviewed, 22 noted the specific skills and know-how that had been transferred by volunteers to DCO staff members. In approximately half of these DCOs, some transfer of skills and know-how took place with DCO managers. With younger DCOs, the skills and know-how transferred tended to be more general and broader, such as the use of computers to support the administrative work of the DCO, or the introduction of greater rigour in project planning and budgeting. With more established organizations, and/or in the later stages of a VCA-DCO relationship, the skills and know-how were more specific and technical.

> In Burkina Faso, CECI volunteer Alain Lamontagne helped a group of associations develop marketing strategies for shea butter as a component of cosmetic products.
>
> Another CECI volunteer, André Sauvageau, helped the Association Song-Taab Yalgré meet the rigorous requirements to acquire international 'organic product' accreditation for the shea butter it was producing.

> In Ghana, a joint project between the Judicial Services of Ghana (JSG), UNICEF and CUSO has brought about major changes in JSG's capacity to track and report on the case load in the judicial system and on the access to the justice system by children and women. This was made possible by the contribution of Lise Gagnon, a CUSO cooperant and jurist with the Quebec court system in Sherbrooke, and two Netcorps interns.
>
> For the first time, JSG has an overview of the current status of pending cases and a tool to monitor and evaluate the various courts throughout the system. This accomplishment is considered a major contribution to the transparency and good governance of the Ghanaian judicial system.

Although skill transfer often occurs between a volunteer and a DCO staff member, volunteers have also had a significant impact on the DCO organizational capacity. Almost all DCOs reported that volunteers contributed in significant ways to the introduction of new program approaches, tools, mechanisms or systems, to the introduction of project management tools and systems, or to the introduction of administration and financial management systems. In some

> In Vietnam, Gilles Boutin, an Oxfam-Québec volunteer, worked with a local team on Community Level Infrastructure Fund projects that benefited 260,000 people (through road construction and improvement, boat ramps, schools and health clinics) in the poorest communes of North Vietnam.). More importantly, local authorities, their best construction workers and several women from local organizations are now able to plan, implement and supervise projects and ensure participation of the population in the process, thereby ensuring high level of ownership, good transparency and high quality of work.

instances volunteers helped DCOs with processes of strategic reflection and strategic management, or with the movement toward greater program focus of the organization. In other cases, volunteers helped to

introduce coordination, communication and/or meeting processes that led to DCOs being managed in a more inclusive and collegial way.

More than half the DCOs reported that their relationship with a VCA or volunteer helped them secure program or project funding and improved their capacity for revenue generation. More than half the DCOs also reported that their relationship

> In Ghana, the Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE), an Accra-based NGO, was founded in 1999 to provide counseling and support to survivors of violence against women. It was a small and not well known organization when CUSO first became involved with it in 2002.
>
> With the placement of a number of CUSO volunteers and some modest financial support, WISE was able to implement a number of successful programs, thereby increasing its profile and attracting the attention of donors.
>
> WISE attributes its success in securing US$400,000 in project funding from the UNHCR to its increased organizational presence and capacity made possible through CUSO's support.

with a VCA or volunteer facilitated linkages with groups in the same sector in their country, and/or with regional and international networks dealing with the same issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS, community economic development, micro-credit, women rights and domestic violence, etc.).

Finding 17: VCAs are helping DCOs improve their performance by increasing the relevance or reach of their programs, introducing new program areas, and increasing DCO credibility, visibility and viability.

The vast majority of the DCOs reviewed (20 of 23) indicated that the support of the VCAs and the contribution of the volunteers allowed them to introduce new programs, improve the quality of existing programs, and/or expand their reach.

> In Burkina Faso, SEMUS, an apex CBO that provides social and agricultural support to poor farmer groups in the province of Passoré, worked with CECI volunteer Marie-Claude Beauchamp to introduce a successful program for HIV/AIDS detection and support to the people infected or affected (e.g. orphans) by HIV/AIDS.
>
> Etienne Kayende, a Canadian CECI volunteer of Congolese origin, is helping SEMUS strengthen its community mobilization and prevention work.

The support of the volunteers and of the VCA has often contributed significantly to the credibility and visibility of DCOs. This increased credibility and visibility is usually directly associated with the quality and effectiveness of the DCOs' programs. But in some instances, it was because the DCO was better able to report on its work and present itself in a more credible way through promotional materials such as pamphlets and organizational profiles that volunteers helped design. This increased credibility and

> In Bolivia, PRAIA, an NGO that works with indigenous groups in the Amazonian region, worked with CUSO volunteer Marc Langevin to introduce an eco-tourism project run by the Moseten and Chiman people.
>
> *"Marc was a catalyst in this project that demonstrated to these indigenous groups that they had the capacity to manage their territory and improve their lives; a project that re-established the pride and confidence of this marginalized population."*
>
> Juan Carlos Schultze, Director of PRAIA

visibility was achieved at some or all of these levels: with the donor community, with the government, both national and local, and with local communities. Increased credibility and visibility in the eyes of the donor community also often helped broaden the DCO revenue base, enhancing its viability.

Although it was beyond the scope of this review to canvass systematically the communities and groups served or targeted by the DCOs, some communities and groups spoke highly of their relationships with the DCOs and the services they provide. In a number of other instances, proxy indicators, such as the increase in number of groups being served by DCO programs, and the waiting lists of groups that have asked to be included in DCO programs, are also positive indicators of the perceived value and effectiveness of these programs to the targeted communities.

Finding 18: Volunteer placements can lead to longer term, mutually beneficial relationships between Canadian civil society organizations and DCOs. In the context of globalization, such organizational solidarity and reciprocity constitute the ideal that many VCAs are striving for.

In some instances, VCAs are able to recruit volunteers from Canadian civil society organizations that are working in the same sector or dealing with the same issues as the DCO. Such placements usually lead to longer-term organizational relationships between the DCO and the 'parent' Canadian organization that are often beneficial to both organizations (see sidebar). These relationships provide capacity building in both directions, and lend themselves to North-South as well as South-North volunteer placements.

Although it would be too restrictive to limit North-South volunteer cooperation to the placement of volunteers that can be recruited from such an organizational context, increasingly VCAs are trying to recruit volunteers from such settings because of the potential of continuing impact over the longer term.

Bastien Lamontagne first went to Burkina Faso as a Canadian Crossroads International volunteer where he worked for 6 months with the Association African Solidarité (AAS), an organization working on HIV/AIDS in Ougadougou.

Bastien is now back in Ougadougou as a CUSO volunteer to assist AAS in establishing an Observance Home.[40] He has more than seven years of community-based work with the Maison Plein Coeur (MPC), an organization working on the fight against HIV/AIDS in the Montreal area. His placement is part of a larger CUSO program on HIV/AIDS in Africa which, in the case of Burkina Faso, involves a number of DCOs, including AAS, working in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and MPC and the Coalition of Quebec Community Organizations for the Struggle against AIDS (COCQSIDA).

Bastien brings to AAS the MPC experience of ensuring that the people being treated with anti-retro-virals by AAS are observing the treatment protocol. Both MPC and Bastien also see his current experience in Burkina Faso as important to MPC since he is learning about how to effectively deal with HIV/AIDS in a West African socio-cultural setting. This is of great importance to MPC since one of its big challenges is to reach and support people of African origin in the communities it serves. MPC, ASS and CUSO are looking at the possibility of supporting a South-North placement as another way of contributing to this work.

4.2.3 Conclusions

DCOs reviewed are overwhelmingly positive in their assessment of the favorable impact volunteer cooperation activities have had on their organizations in terms of organizational motivation, capacities and performance. On the whole, most VCA-DCO relationships have evolved into a longer term relationship involving a number of placements and other forms of support. This overall programmatic intervention, of which the volunteer placement remains an important part, is supporting the capacity development results reported here.

4.3 Canadian Public Results

4.3.1 Study Background

The study on Canadian public engagement examined the activities of CECI, CESO, CUSO, CWY, and Oxfam-Québec. The review team assessed the results of VCAs' public engagement activities in four broad areas:

- Change in Canadians' level of understanding and openness to different cultures, world views and perspectives;

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[40] An Observance Home is a place where persons taking anti-retro-virals are monitored for compliance with the treatment protocol. Observance Homes have other important purposes including the provision of psycho-social support to both the patient and his/her immediate family.

- Change in Canadians' level of knowledge, awareness and/or sensitivity to development and related issues;

- Change in Canadians' motivation to get involved in activities, or learn more about issues addressed by VCAs;

- Increase or maintenance[41] of Canadian public's support for and/or involvement in international development, related community work and/or with VCAs.

Selected characteristics about the study sample are summarized below.

CIDA support for reviewed Public Engagement Activities/Programs: Although public engagement work was carried out by all of the VCAs as part of their volunteer-sending programs, the majority of the VCAs included in this study were not explicitly and/or separately funded to carry out public engagement work in Canada during the five-year period under examination (1999-2004). The VCAs were also, for the most part, not required to report the results of their public engagement work for this same period.

Nature of Public Engagement:

VCAs' public engagement activities ranged in nature, size, scope and target audience – from small community events organized by RVs to talk about their overseas experience, to national-level, multi-faceted campaigns aimed at broad Canadian audiences. The majority of the VCAs included in the study demonstrated a range of public

> **VCA Public Engagement Activities**
>
> RVs meeting with community members • Public exhibits • Canadian tours by South partners • Publications • Cultural events • Newsletters • Websites • Speaking engagements • Workshops • Press releases • Classroom resources and curriculum development • Support for cultural exchanges between Canadian youth and partners from the South • Films, documentaries, TV productions, videos, public service announcements • Fundraiser campaigns and/or events for selected cause • Addressing MPs, provincial and municipal authorities on international cooperation issues •Youth-targeted events and campaigns • Conferences and symposiums

engagement activities (see sidebar). The exception is CESO, which was much more focused in the scope of its activities.

Although the VCAs carried out many similar types of public engagement activities over the five-year period under review, their approaches were quite different. Of the five VCAs included in this study, Oxfam-Québec was the only VCA that had a cohesive and separate public engagement strategy for the full five-year period under review (see section 4.5.2). The public engagement activities of the other VCAs tended to be less focused and more responsive, and were often the result of the initiative of staff, RVs and volunteers at the local or regional levels. This in no way suggests that significant results were not achieved, but simply that these were not achieved through a strategic plan for public engagement. It is also significant to note that Oxfam-Québec is affiliated with Oxfam International. As such, Oxfam-Québec is able to link its own PE campaigns to those of Oxfam International. While no direct funding is received from Oxfam International to support PE in Quebec, the materials and strategies produced at the international level are a significant contribution to Oxfam-Québec's work.

Until recently CIDA did not provide financial support, direction or requirements with respect to public engagement as a separate program area for VCAs – the absence of explicit PE strategies amongst some of the VCAs must be viewed in this context. At the time of writing, clear efforts are

> CWY public engagement work is unique in the context of the volunteer cooperation program. As all aspects of CWY's work in Canada involve interaction and/or engagement with members of the Canadian public, it is difficult to separate public engagement strategies from volunteer programming. This characteristic of CWY overall programming offers extraordinary opportunities for public engagement work, and is likely to be a significant strength of CWY's public engagement strategies.

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[41] Some interviewees suggested maintaining their involvement or support constituted an increased involvement – meaning that without the VCAs' public engagement activities, their involvement would have decreased. This indicator has been revised from its original form in the workplan, to reflect this finding.

underway in all of the VCAs to develop distinct public engagement strategies and programming; the fruits of some of these efforts emerged in this study.

4.3.2 Achievements

Finding 19: Through their public engagement work, VCAs have had a definite impact on a wide range of Canadian citizens and organizations.

The review team interviewed audience members, returned volunteers and representatives of organizations that had participated in public engagement events.

Every single person interviewed for this study has been affected by VCAs' public engagement activities. In most cases interviewees identified results for both themselves and other members of the Canadian public. See the sidebar for a small sampling of the Canadians for whom results were identified through our interviews.

In terms of the different types of results, most Canadians reported that they had been affected in more than one way – they increased their knowledge of international development, were motivated to get involved, and did get involved. (See Findings 20-24 for more detailed results.) In addition, a number of unintended results were also identified as a result of VCAs' public engagement activities – such as the development of skills in international development project management or language skills (see sidebar).

In addition to individual results, VCA activities have led to results at the organizational level. Thirteen Canadian organizational partners were interviewed, including unions, research organizations, schools, provincial councils, and NGOs focused on particular development issues. Partnerships between these organizations and the VCAs ranged from short-term, issue-specific campaigns to formal, multi-year partnerships.

Nine out of thirteen organizational partners interviewed cited strong results for their organizations as a direct result of their collaboration with VCAs in public engagement activities – most notably in terms of their increased profile in Canada, and their increased knowledge of and involvement in international cooperation and related issues.

Canadians Affected by Volunteer Cooperation Activities

Elementary and secondary school children • University students • Teachers • Academic community • Francophone communities across Canada • Farming and rural communities • First Nations and Inuit communities • African Nova Scotian community • Members of ethnic communities • Union members • Women's groups • Seniors • NGO community • Elected officials • Government sector • Members of the business community • Church groups • HIV/AIDS workers and clientele • Families and communities of Returned Volunteers • Families and communities that hosted representatives or partners from the South • Members of health and medical communities • Local, regional and national-level media • The Canadian public

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Unintended Results of Public Engagement Activities

RVs and participants have acquired strong public speaking skills

Host families or host workplaces for CWY gained language skills

Canadian partner organizations gained skills in project development

Youth caravan participants gained skills in event-organizing and multi-media and Internet technology skills – videoconferencing, documentary-making

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CWY and ACT

As a result of CWY's many PE activities and public profile, the AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) partnered with CWY on a three-year HIV/AIDS project with counterparts in India.

An ACT staff member interviewed said that this experience had many positive effects: it increased staff members' understanding of Indian culture and knowledge about HIV-AIDS in an international context; it helped ACT work with Canadian HIV-AIDS survivors/clients, workers, supporters in the Toronto community; it inspired him to lead an HIV-AIDS project with a partner in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and consequently helped ACT to reach out into the Portuguese community living with HIV/AIDS in Toronto.

Prior to their work with CWY, ACT had no international development experience. Today, the organization's mandate includes an explicit international focus.

Finding 20: As a result of VCA public engagement activities, Canadians have developed a greater understanding of and openness to different cultures in the developing world and in Canada.

In examining changes in Canadians' level of understanding and openness to different cultures, world views and perspectives, the review team found that the Canadians who most frequently reported such changes as the result of a public engagement event were youth (elementary through university) and people from smaller cities or towns.

Youth Caravan

CECI and the Centre Marie-Anne Gaboury in Alberta organized a cross-country youth caravan that included Francophone youth from Canada and West African countries. In Montreal, the caravan held an event on hip-hop as cultural expression and used tele-conferencing to connect Canadian youth with Francophone youth in Cameroon.

One young Canadian participant said she learned about a living and breathing Africa, where youth face similar issues. She has decided to pursue a career in international cooperation.

Reaching Youth and Rural Communities

VCAs commonly aimed to reach youth – through implicit or explicit strategies.

One interviewee noted that changes amongst youth were so evident because of the sharp learning curve. A PE activity is often their first face-to-face encounter with someone from a different cultural background with a different world view.

Respondents suggested that rural communities are so affected because they have less exposure to different cultures than urban Canadians.

The most consistently effective strategy in this regard, and the one used by all VCAs (implicitly or explicitly), was to engage Canadians at the local level – through either a Returned Volunteer who was a member of their community or through an individual from a developing country (i.e. South-North exchange), or through hosting a CWY participant in their community, home or workplace. These local activities gave Canadians an up-close encounter with other cultures and world perspectives without ever leaving their homes, schools, workplaces and/or communities. Interviewees frequently reported that as a result of these encounters they developed a connection with people living in a developing country and became more open to different ways of living or doing things.

All 26 of the Returned Volunteers interviewed reported that community members were often quite moved to hear of the issues facing people in developing countries, which they had not been aware of, but some were also quick to identify with the similarities in "struggling to make ends meet and support their family too." As such, the RVs provided a "human face" for people in developing countries. Representatives from developing countries also brought information about other cultures into local community events and schools and homes, and provided opportunities for Canadians to learn about and develop a more knowledgeable understanding of other cultures and issues. Such experiences enabled Canadians to identify points of commonality – rather than differences.

This phenomenon of the VCAs bringing other cultures into people's homes was summed up by one CWY host family, who said that hosting CWY participants from Uruguay "was like going to Uruguay itself."

We're different but the same

A CUSO partner from Ghana spoke to elementary school children in rural Ontario. She told the children that in Ghana the kids did not always have desks and chairs. One child asked how Ghanaian children could study. The Ghanaian partner lay down on the floor and showed them how the kids just wrote in their notebooks on the ground. The CUSO RV interviewed said that the Ontario school kids were amazed and excited to find out that, while the conditions were different, those school kids faced similar things.

Interviewees also reported that gaining new perspectives and openness to other cultures in the developing world creates an attitude of openness toward fellow Canadians from a different background. For example, many CWY host family or work placement interviewees (based in English-speaking Canada) stated that they learned as much from participants from Québec as they did from participants from other countries.

As noted in Finding 20 above, public engagement activities at the local level enabled members of the Canadian public to identify with people from developing countries and develop a more complex understanding of other cultures – whether Canadian

> **Building Respect**
>
> After returning from working in Sri Lanka and Jamaica, a CESO volunteer returned to his small town in Southern Ontario. When speaking to community groups about his experience, he found that initially many had negative perceptions about Jamaicans and Tamils, suggesting that they were criminal and should not be let into Canada. Over the course of his time with them, he talked about cultural differences, poverty, development work, and the many positive experiences he had had with members of these communities. Through talking with the community about his experience, he found that they became more open and receptive, and more respectful of Canadians from these ethnic backgrounds.

or foreign. In essence, this finding suggests that VCA public engagement strategies contribute to the realization of Canada's multi-cultural identity.

Finding 21: Canadians consistently noted that VCAs' public engagement activities increased their knowledge, awareness and sensitivity to development and related issues.

Whether attending CUSO's conference on climate change or attending a photo exhibit organized by Oxfam-Québec, interviewees consistently noted an increase in knowledge, awareness and sensitivity to development related issues. The increase in knowledge was noted at both the individual and organizational level; only three of the 13 organizational partners interviewed did not note an increase in knowledge due to their collaboration with VCAs in public engagement activities. Results in this area were primarily measured through:

> **PE on Development Issues**
>
> Fair trade • Health, including HIV/AIDS • Environmental issues • Gender • Globalization • Sustainable development • International cooperation • Education

- Individuals' and organizations' perception that their involvement in VCA activities increased their knowledge, awareness and/or sensitivity to a development-related issue; and

- A noted increase by interviewees in their ability to engage in discussions concerning a development-related issue.

Such changes were most significant when Canadians were approached via a thematic/sectoral issue of relevance to them (e.g. farmers were approached on the issue of fair trade – see sidebar). This finding supports the implicit logic underlying all of the VCAs work: that development issues can only truly be addressed through solidarity at an international level.

> At a CUSO fair trade show, a farmer who had never previously seen the relevance of fair trade became interested and engaged in the issue, recognizing that he had more in common with farmers from developing countries than he did differences. He went on to get involved in supporting fair trade.

The extent to which Canadians' knowledge increased was tempered by the extent of knowledge that they already had. Canadians who already had a high level of awareness before participating in VCA public engagement events stated that their knowledge and sensitivity did not increase.

> Canadian attendees at CUSO's climate change conference stated that their knowledge of climate change increased, in terms of their understanding of climate change issues in the context of international development.

Finding 22: VCA public engagement activities motivated many Canadians and some Canadian institutions to get more involved or stay involved in community work and/or international development.

Many different sectors of the Canadian public were identified as having been affected in this result area. Youth reported that they were most affected in their career choices (i.e. they have decided to work for the non-profit sector) or educational choices (i.e. they have decided to go into the field of international studies or international development). Many school children across Québec now sell fair trade chocolates for fundraisers. Among the general Canadian public, increased involvement was often evident in terms of volunteering for one of the VCAs, greater involvement in VCA-organized events, and greater support for VCA campaigns. For example, a number of interviewees reported that they or others they knew were now purchasing more fair trade products as a result of VCAs' public engagement activities such as fair trade shows and other types of public education such as Oxfam-Québec's information, materials and workshops conducted with teachers' unions.

Results in this area were also evident at the organizational level – with a number of organizational partners stating that their organizations were more involved and/or committed to working on campaigns or international development-related issues as a result of their collaboration with VCAs in public engagement activities. For example, because of its collaboration with CUSO on public engagement activities, the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives (CAPI) at the University of Victoria states that it is now much more involved in international development-related events and campaigns with the non-academic community and NGOs.

Finding 23: As a result of VCA public engagement activities, public support for VCAs has increased, either in financial donations or in an increase in volunteer support.

Overall, interviews showed that Canadians want to support the kind of work that VCAs do, and that almost all public engagement activities or strategies have drawn new support to the VCAs – either through an increase in volunteers, or financial or in-kind donations. Talks given by

> After Daniel Igali toured three elementary schools in Ontario to talk about his CUSO-endorsed plan to build a school in Nigeria, students at each of the three schools independently raised $1000 for the Nigeria school.

RVs for all of the VCAs consistently drew financial support from attendees – often, specifically for the projects on which the RV was working or had worked. VCA public engagement activities also often drew in new volunteers – such as CUSO's fair trade campaign in the prairies, which now boasts a significant volunteer committee that maintains momentum for activities in that region. Currently, this committee is working on lobbying municipal governments to only use fair trade coffee. New support gained through VCA activities was noted from a wide range of sectors – from students, their families and teachers, to members of the business and medical communities.

Finding 24: Although VCAs are reaching wider sectors of the Canadian public than in the past, some significant opportunities to achieve results for the Canadian public have been missed.

One of the most frequent comments made by interviewees – both individual and organizational – as well as by some of the VCAs themselves, was that public engagement activities have too often only reached the "converted" or that VCAs have too often been "preaching to the choir."

> **Reaching New Communities**
>
> For the last couple of years, CUSO's Halifax office has been working with the Connecting to Africa Society. Both CUSO and the African Nova Scotian community have gained from this collaboration. CUSO has tapped into an African Nova Scotian community that was not reached before by the international development community, and African Nova Scotians are able to benefit from CUSO's wealth of experience of working in strong partnerships in West Africa.

Awareness of this fact has, however, led a number of VCAs to reach out to new communities and some of these efforts have already shown results. Over the last year, there is evidence that VCAs have actually successfully reached some new communities, audiences or sectors of the Canadian public such as the farming community, Francophone youth across Canada, African Nova Scotian community, and members of various First Nations.

However, this outreach is often due to the initiative of individual staff, volunteers or regional offices, rather than as a result of a cohesive national strategy.

Despite the strong overall results of VCA public engagement activities, it is essential to note that interviews also suggested that some significant opportunities to achieve results for the Canadian public were missed by the majority of VCAs included in this study.[42] As a result, it appears that not as many Canadians have been reached and/or engaged by the VCA program as they could have been over the five-year period under review.

Although it is difficult to prove, there is anecdotal evidence that some members of the Canadian public would likely have gotten more

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Missing Opportunities

One of the RVs spoke of a number of events she attended where there was a great interest by the public in getting involved by forming a solidarity network to support the VCA's partner overseas. However, due to a lack of human resources, no follow-up was carried out with these potential volunteers.

Similarly, some VCA-organized events failed to invite the participation of the wider Canadian community in which the events were taking place – despite a clear interest on the part of the community to take part.

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involved in, or been more supportive of VCAs, had they been supported to do so by the VCAs. In many of these cases, the immediate problem was lack of follow-up (e.g. collecting names and contact information from interested individuals, inviting people to come to meetings, letting people know how they can help).

Another clear example of missed opportunities is the large number of RVs across Canada whose interest in volunteering has not as yet been fully tapped by VCAs. Some RVs interviewed said they would do more if they had more direction or guidance from the VCA, and that they know other RVs who feel the same. In the RV study, a number of interviewees stated that their contact with the VCA had largely been initiated by them, and not by the VCA. The VCAs are aware of and concerned about this and are developing more systematic ways to reach out to RVs (e.g. through new tools, alumni magazine, better databases).

4.3.3 Conclusions

Strong results were documented in each of the inferred result areas across the VCAs included in this study. One of the strategies that proved to be the most effective in achieving results for the Canadian public was that of engaging Canadians at the local level – either through a Returned Volunteer or through an individual from a developing country (i.e. through South-North exchanges). This public engagement strategy, whether explicit or implicit, was evident across VCAs. Essentially, it enabled Canadians to identify with people from developing countries, fostering a more complex understanding of other cultures and creating a better ground upon which Canadians learned about development issues and how they related to their own lives in Canada.

Wide sectors of Canadians were found to have been reached in the past year, including some new communities not reached before. However, perhaps most notable was the impact of VCA public engagement activities on Canadian youth – for whom the impact was strong in every result area.

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[42] No missed opportunities were noted in the case of Oxfam-Québec. This is not to suggest that there were no missed opportunities for Oxfam-Québec, but that none were noted in this study.

Despite these findings, this study also found evidence that significant opportunities had been missed to achieve results for the Canadian public across all VCAs except Oxfam-Québec. The main reason for these missed opportunities appeared to relate to a lack of a cohesive public engagement strategy and a lack of financial and human resources to oversee such a strategy. Without a public engagement strategy and sufficient allocated resources to implement it, the VCAs' achievement of public engagement results for the majority of the five year period appear to be due to ad hoc activities, one-off activities or events, and largely due to the initiative of staff, RVs and volunteers at the local or regional levels. Oxfam-Québec's example also shows that working in strategic partnership with other organizations can also go a long way toward maximizing opportunities to reach the Canadian public.

That the VCAs' have pursued PE activities in a more ad hoc fashion and lacked strong PE strategies was noted by the VCAs themselves, who have been working to develop clear and cohesive strategies for PE programming for the past year. While it is too early to tell what effect these strategies will have, it is clear from a review of Oxfam-Québec that a strong PE strategy is a key factor for successful PE programming. VCAs have tasked their PE/communications specialists to form a PE working group on collaborative PE work among them. Also, Uniterra (the joint WUSC-CECI initiative) has launched a major PE initiative under the rubric of the MDGs. CIDA has also recognized the importance of PE and as such, a distinct Public Engagement component has been included in the current five-year agreements CIDA has with each VCA. CIDA and VCAs have agreed to cooperate on a joint public engagement initiative involving returned volunteers to coincide with the International Day of the Volunteer on December 5, 2005.

We applaud these initiatives and suggest that CIDA and the VCAs review the progress of their PE activities again in one year, given that their PE strategies are so new and that CIDA is in the process of updating its PE strategy.

4.4 Returned Volunteer Results

4.4.1 Study Background

The Returned Volunteer (RV) study examined the results that volunteer sending has had over the past ten years (1994-2004) on volunteers who have gone overseas with Canadian Crossroads International (CCI), Canada World Youth (CWY), VSO Canada , and World University Service of Canada (WUSC). The review team assessed the results of volunteer sending on the returned volunteers by looking at three broad areas, which were defined as inferred results by the VCAs, namely

- Effects on the motivation of returned volunteers (beliefs, values, etc.)

- Effects on the capacities of returned volunteers (skills, knowledge, abilities)

- Effects on the performance of returned volunteers (careers, education, etc.)

Distinct purposes of volunteer sending: It is crucial to note that while all organizations see sending volunteers overseas as a key part of their mandate, they do not all have the same motivation for doing so (see sidebar). However, despite these different approaches, results on individual volunteers are generally consistent across the reviewed organizations.

> WUSC and VSO Canada send more professional volunteers for longer periods of time.
>
> CCI sends volunteers for shorter periods to do specific tasks for DCOs.
>
> CWY sends young Canadians overseas to gain a first experience in international development through living and working with another culture in a developing country.

4.4.2 Achievements

Given the different approaches that the VCAs take in their volunteer sending programs, one would presume that the results on individual volunteers would be different – but this is not the case. While there are variations in the ways in which various individuals were affected (e.g. the experience of being a volunteer seems to have a more profound affect on younger people), people who have chosen to volunteer overseas seem to be affected in similar ways by their experience regardless of the type of program they participate in. The following findings hold true for all of the VCAs reviewed.

Finding 25: The experience of being an overseas volunteer has significant impacts on RVs' beliefs and values.

Returned volunteers were asked to what extent their experience had affected their values and beliefs toward politics, international development, and people from different backgrounds and cultures. Returned volunteers speak of the profound effect that

> *"The only other comparable experience was the birth of my daughter!"*
>
> Female RV who spent one year in Africa

living and working overseas has had on their lives. They all speak to an increased sense of the world's dichotomies and take a more critical approach to issues. This often leads to an increased sense of responsibility to take action in the world. This holds true regardless of the length of the placement. Previous overseas experience does seem to have an effect – those with less experience speak of more profound effects. However, volunteers who have had previous overseas experience (including other volunteer placements) still speak of a deepening or reaffirmation of their values and beliefs. The survey results indicate that their overseas experience had a significant effect on their values and beliefs in all areas, particularly in regard to international development and people with a different background (see Exhibit 4.2).

Exhibit 4.2   Volunteer Experience Overseas – Effects on RV Values, Beliefs and Attitudes

EFFECT ON MY VALUES, BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS:	EXTENT TO WHICH THE EXPERIENCE AFFECTED ME:			
	TO A GREAT EXTENT	SOMEWHAT	VERY LITTLE	NOT AT ALL
People with a different background	70%	23%	5%	2%
International politics	67%	26%	6%	1%
Local and national politics	47%	43%	9%	1%
International development	78%	19%	3%	0%
Community development	63%	33%	3%	1%

Finding 26: Overseas volunteer experience fosters an awareness of Canada's role in the world and a sense of global citizenship.

The RVs who were interviewed all mentioned that they felt more like global citizens upon their return to Canada. Experiencing life in another country and working with local organizations fostered a deeper understanding of Canada's role in the world. RVs reported that they are now more aware of international issues, and recognize that their lives here in Canada have an impact on the rest of the world – as a result RVs feel more connected to the world. Many RVs

> Upon returning to Canada, an RV who spent two years in Latin America felt a strong need to stay connected to North-South issues. He became involved in development organizations and made a career of it. However, he never felt completely satisfied. He kept thinking back to his volunteer experience and the people he had met who were working on global issues in their own communities. As a result he helped found a fair trade cooperative here in Canada. It took him a while to get there, but he says that his experience as a volunteer started the process.

spoke of the power Canada has to make a difference in the world, and how the sending of volunteers goes a long way in breaking down some of the walls that exist between "us" and "them," and fostering a new sense of solidarity between Canadians and their overseas counterparts.

Finding 27: The majority of returned volunteers report volunteering overseas helps develop and/or enhance their skills in a variety of ways.

In terms of skills development, RVs talked about how they developed people skills such as listening, cross-cultural communication, and conflict resolution. They noted that living overseas in often difficult circumstances challenged them to look at their own values and come to terms with other ways of doing things.

In terms of developing technical/professional skills, volunteers from three of the organizations (CCI, VSO Canada, WUSC) are usually placed overseas to carry out specific tasks such as project management and capacity building, and they already have the necessary skills. They found, however, that their skills were more suited to a Canadian context and they had to learn to improvise and be creative in the application of their knowledge overseas. As a result, RVs noted that the professional skills they already possessed were enhanced by their experiences overseas.

Once they return, RVs use the skills developed or enhanced during their placements to a varying degree in different aspects of their lives. The survey asked RVs to what extent they use the skills, knowledge and abilities developed during their placement in their work, personal lives, communities or school. As shown in Exhibit 4.3, more than 40% of RVs report having utilized newly acquired skills or knowledge to a great extent in all aspects of their lives, and almost 60% note the positive impact on their personal lives.

Putting New Skills to Use at Home

A young man who took part in a CWY exchange says that living for six months with a counterpart from another country taught him skills in cross-cultural understanding and communication. When he returned to Canada, he put these skills to use by volunteering with an immigrant settlement organization, helping new immigrants adjust to their lives in Canada.

A physiotherapist who volunteered for two years in Africa says that working in a developing country, without many of the supports available in Canada, taught her new ways of doing things. Now, working in the "developed" world, when her colleagues say something can't be done, she is able to look at the problem in a new and creative way that often leads to a solution.

Exhibit 4.3   Volunteer Experience Overseas – Effects on RV Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

EFFECT ON MY SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES USED IN:	EXTENT TO WHICH THE EXPERIENCE AFFECTED ME:			
	TO A GREAT EXTENT	SOMEWHAT	VERY LITTLE	NOT AT ALL
Work	40%	44%	12%	4%
Personal life	58%	38%	3%	1%
Community	40%	48%	11%	1%
Education	40%	43%	13%	4%

Finding 28: Career and/or education decisions are greatly influenced by overseas volunteer experiences. Many returned volunteers returned to Canada to study development related topics, others have shifted career paths to stay involved in the non-profit or public sectors.

Many of the RVs reported that they had changed or refocused their careers upon returning to Canada. The survey found that 46% of the RVs who responded acknowledged that their experience as an overseas volunteer affected their career decisions to a great extent, and 40% indicated that their career decisions were somewhat affected by their overseas placement (only 4% indicated that their decisions were not affected by their experience). Further, a significant number of those who took a break from university or college to go on their placements refocused their studies

Volunteer Experience Affects Education Choices…

A young woman in her 2nd year of medical school went to West Africa on a three-month placement. In Canada she had been determined to become a surgeon and was gearing her studies toward this goal. After her experience in Africa, she returned to medical school and changed her focus to become a General Practitioner so that she could work more closely with communities.

…and Career Choices

A professional librarian who had been working in academic institutions went overseas on a two-year volunteer placement to Asia. There she worked on a project that was piloting community access to libraries and information technologies. When she returned to Canada she looked for and got a job as a public librarian. She credits this career change directly to her experience overseas as she saw the important effects of access to information for people.

on international or development related topics when they returned. Others came back from their placements to pursue graduate studies in a field related to their experience (development, education, etc.). The survey found that 47% of respondents indicated that their education decisions were affected to a great extent by their experience overseas and another 38% said that their experience somewhat affected the decisions they made around education (only 3% indicated that their education decisions had not been affected by their experience at all).

Finding 29: Many returned volunteers continue to be active in community or international development through work, volunteerism (often with the VCAs) or donations.

The majority of RVs who were interviewed spoke of their continued involvement in community development or international development issues. They have either pursued a career in development or volunteer with community groups (e.g. immigrant welcome committees, local advocacy groups, Amnesty International, etc.) or both. A significant number of RVs had a history of volunteerism in their communities and their experience overseas simply solidified their commitment to volunteerism. The online survey found similar results (see Exhibit 4.4).

Exhibit 4.4   Volunteer Experience Overseas – Effects on Continued RV Involvement in Development

INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT IN TERMS OF:	% OF RESPONDENTS
Career	52
Community or Service groups	60
International Development Organizations	37
Donations	47
No involvement at all	18

When asked if they volunteered with specific groups because of their volunteer experience, 68% of the respondents indicated that they are involved with community groups because of their experience overseas, and 41% said they are involved with international development groups because of their experience. As well, 50% of the volunteers surveyed also indicated that they have remained somewhat active with the organization they went overseas with; 6% say they are extremely active.

4.4.3 Conclusions

The results of volunteer cooperation on returned volunteers are deep and long lasting. The review found that being a volunteer overseas has a profound effect on individual volunteers. This effect lasts for the rest of their lives, in fact some of the volunteers interviewed actually referred to their experience overseas as the watershed moment in their lives. From the point of view of returned volunteers, the VCP is a success.

4.5 Developmental Success Factors

4.5.1 Relevance

Finding 30:   The two components of VCP – local capacity building and public engagement – are clearly aligned with the priorities of stakeholders in Canada and developing countries.

In order to assess the relevance of the program, we examined the extent to which it is congruent with the relevant priorities of the GoC, CIDA, developing countries, DCOs and VCAs. The review team found that many stakeholders value Canadian volunteer cooperation. This was true for CIDA, developing country governments, the DCOs, NGOs, unions and other partners, returned volunteers, as well as communities and groups touched by the Program.

Relevance to CIDA priorities: We examined VCP in the context of the CIDA priorities and policies listed in the sidebar and found that overall, VCP purposes and components are congruent with CIDA priorities in most areas shown in the sidebar. A detailed analysis of relevance to CIDA is presented in Appendix XX.

CIDA's Policy for Environmental Sustainability (1992)

Canada in the World (1995)

CIDA's Policy on Gender Equality (1999)

CIDA Key Agency Results Framework - KARs (2001

CIDA's Social Development Priorities, A Framework for Action (2001)

Canada Making a Difference in the World, A Policy Statement on Strengthening Aid Effectiveness (2002)

Sustainable Development Strategy: 2004-2006 (2004)

CPB vision statement (2002)

Public Engagement Strategy and Action Plan (1999)

Relevance to DCOs and developing countries: In general, DCOs reviewed see VCP's local capacity building activities as highly relevant to the needs of civil society, particularly in situations where decentralization is adding to the responsibilities of local government and communities. Volunteers are seen as a particularly appropriate response because of their readiness and ability to work at this level.

DCOs report that VCA programs/activities contribute to their strategic and operational needs/objectives, and help them address specific technical needs (skills and experience). Volunteer cooperation is also seen by developing country respondents as adding considerable value to developing countries themselves (see section 4.5.3) and as a way to make sure certain parts of the world are understood and not forgotten. That being said, maintaining VCP relevance in a changing context is also complex – as noted in the sidebar.

Government representatives of developing countries that we interviewed noted that volunteers bring important skills and experience in areas of capacity shortage, they help rectify the distorted image of developing countries that is often portrayed by the international media, and they play an important role in strengthening civil society organizations in these countries.

Relevance to Canadian public: The work of the VCAs contributes to the engagement of Canadians, supporting diversity and multiculturalism within Canada. As noted in Section 4.3, VCP has increased the involvement of Canadian individuals and/or organizations as a result of their exposure to VCAs' public engagement work – implying that VCA programming has a high degree of resonance for members of the Canadian public. It was also evident in the interviews that VCAs had, to a large extent, targeted activities to Canadian communities that would find a natural relevance to them – and that this approach contributed to successful results (see sidebar). Moreover, VCAs' organizational partners consistently reported that VCAs' work was highly relevant for them and their constituencies. RVs also consistently reported that VCAs' work was highly relevant for their home communities.

Relevance to VCA priorities and volunteers: Volunteer placements in the countries and DCOs visited in the field fit within VCA organizational frameworks (areas of programmatic focus, key result areas, etc.). At the field level, volunteers have a clear understanding of the global missions and visions of their organizations, and a demonstrated capacity to translate these into operational objectives at the country level.

Are we reaching the poorest and most marginalized?

As a result of budget cuts, some VCAs have had to focus on more accessible DCOs (NGOs and CBOs).

As a result of the increased focus on RBM, some VCAs are shifting investments to areas where results can be demonstrated more easily rather than targeting the most needy; some are working with more established NGOs rather than with emerging organizations that require more support.

CIDA countries of focus are not necessarily the poorest. By focusing on a smaller number of countries, many poorer countries are being abandoned.

Farming and Fair Trade

In the prairie region, CUSO has targeted a great deal of its fair-trade campaigning at the farming community. This engagement appears to have had some significant success because it has built an understanding within the farming community in Canada of the links between the issues they face with those that agricultural workers face elsewhere in the world. At a CUSO fair-trade table at an agricultural fair in rural Manitoba, a farmer who had not been aware of fair-trade products spent a great deal of time talking with CUSO. At the end, he was highly supportive of fair-trade and wanted to get involved in working collaboratively with CUSO partners in the South on fair-trade issues.

Finding 31: Despite strong evidence about the relevance of volunteer co-operation, CIDA gives some mixed messages about the value of such programs.

Several efforts have been made by CIDA and others in the VCA community to clarify the purpose, objectives, value, results and/or effectiveness of CIDA-supported volunteer sending and cooperation investments over the past 12 years. As part of our review we found several CIDA-commissioned studies that were tasked with assessing the ongoing relevance, effectiveness, impacts and efficiency of such investments. Generally, the findings of such reviews have been positive (see sidebar).

> **Views on the value of volunteer cooperation**
>
> 1992 *Volunteer cooperation is an unrecognized school whose graduates are not used to their full capacity, even under the present international and Canadian context where that kind of experience should be highly appreciated* (Econotec Evaluation Report, page vii)
>
> 1994 *If Canada's VSAs didn't already exist, it would be in our national interest to establish them. It is Canada that loses most from the under-valuing and under-utilization of volunteer sending.* (Effects of Canadian Volunteer Sending, Evaluation Report, p .ii)
>
> *Viewed in this positive light, the presence of returning volunteers is felt in Canada – working in development NGOs or at CIDA, rising to senior positions in these organizations. Others entered politics, while others resumed teaching in Canada contributing to education of Canadians.* (Effects of Canadian Volunteer Sending, Evaluation Report, 1994, p. 3)

Despite such positive findings, a review of previous evaluations suggests some inconsistencies in the Agency about support for volunteer cooperation that echo a broader international reflection in the 1990s on the value of volunteer cooperation and technical assistance.[43] Individuals within CIDA have varying exposure to and understanding of volunteer cooperation. In the past, CIDA staff, managers and senior decision-makers included many ex-volunteers with personal experience and knowledge of volunteer cooperation; this appears to be less common today. Many older former volunteers are not up-to-date with the latest programming approaches used by VCAs, and presume that volunteer cooperation is the same as it was 20 or even 30 years ago. Moreover, there has been considerable turnover of CPB managers and staff, which has compounded the problem.

Until recently, volunteer cooperation tended to be tracked by CIDA and VCAs in terms of the number of "warm bodies" sent overseas. In the past decade, the changes in volunteer cooperation and results of volunteer cooperation programs[44] have not been well tracked, reported and/or communicated by either VCAs or CPB.[45] As a consequence, those closest to the programs (volunteers, VCAs and CIDA managers responsible for managing program agreements with VCAs) have more up-to-date and accurate information regarding results, while those outside the "inner circle" (including other

> *Within some volunteer sending NGOs, there is a concern that volunteers are regarded by CIDA as something dépassé, and that there is an unspoken policy to downgrade this aspect of the NGO community* 1984, Smillie, Ian and Henry Helmich, NGO and Government, Stakeholders for Development, Paris, OECD, 1984, p 108
>
> *(VCAs) recognize that doubts and questions about volunteer sending have over time weakened the sense of partnership with CIDA. One of the most surprising aspect of this study ...was discovering how entrenched certain myths are within CIDA vis-à-vis volunteering. CIDA officials hold a range of views about different aspects of volunteer sending rather than a single, unified view.* Canadian Volunteer Sending, Evaluation Report, 1994, pp.5, 12)

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[43] The Use of Personnel in Development Cooperation, Denmark, 2003

[44] Since the VCP was only recently created, we use the plural here to refer to the individual programs of the VSAs and the VCAs.

[45] One indication of this is that volunteer cooperation (and the VCP) and what it entails are not readily located on the CIDA web site, even though this constitutes a significant element of CPB programming.

parts of CPB, and CIDA) have mixed perceptions or no understanding of these programs. In the course of this review, for example, we noted that staff members at Canadian High Commissions and Embassies have varied perceptions of the value of the program.

> *VSAs will no longer be viewed or assessed in relation to public education or private sector involvement. VSAs would instead be regarded and evaluated as development agencies that include among their development mechanisms a volunteer sending component.*
>
> Évaluation du Programme d'envoi des volontaires (1992) p. 11

For the past decade, CIDA has emphasized development results over public engagement priorities. Despite the evolution in and enhanced performance of volunteer cooperation programs in realizing developmental results in this time period, many still believe that the primary beneficiaries of volunteer cooperation are individual Canadians, rather than developing countries. As a consequence, such programs are either downplayed or viewed as politically incorrect.

There have been frequent changes in the Ministers responsible for CIDA in the past decade (ten since 1989[46]), and their support for volunteer cooperation programs has varied. (As has been observed in other countries, such as the Netherlands, the responsible minister's views of volunteer cooperation and his or her support for such programs matter a great deal.) In addition, the responsibility for volunteer cooperation has shifted within CPB many times in the past few decades, which, compounded by the lack of a program approach, did not support the development of a coherent approach to CIDA's investment in volunteer cooperation.

Finally, in contrast to Canada's Youth Employment Strategy and Australia's new policy on international volunteers (see sidebar), Canada has no clearly defined statement that describes **why** the GoC and/or CIDA support international volunteering and programs, and **how** the various international volunteering programs (including, but not limited to, VCP, Canada Corps, NetCorps and CIDA Youth Internships) support this vision.

In the absence of such a statement, misunderstandings about the program will continue. In our view, this is an opportune time for CIDA, in collaboration with other relevant government departments and programs, to define more explicitly why Canada invests in international volunteering, and to communicate

> **Canada's Youth Employment Strategy** articulates clear reasons for skill development among Canada's youth: to help young Canadians (aged 15 to 30) obtain career information, develop skills, find good jobs and stay employed. This national strategy offers a broad range of initiatives under three programs: Skills Link, Summer Work Experience, and Career Focus.
>
> **Australia** has developed a volunteer policy that clearly articulates how international volunteering fits within its overseas development assistance strategy. The policy outlines the goal and objectives of volunteering, expected contribution of volunteers in partnership with developing countries, and their role in raising awareness of development issues in Australia. The policy also articulates how youth will be involved through the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) program.[47]

this more clearly within CIDA, GoC and to Canadians. This would bolster commitments already made by CIDA to international volunteer cooperation by, for example, VCP and the provision of five-year agreements to the VCAs.

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[46] *Making a Difference? External Views on Canada's International Impact* An interim report of the External Voices Project. (Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 2005)

[47] AusAID, Volunteers and Australian Development Cooperation, August 2004.

4.5.2 Sustainability

Finding 32: There is evidence of sustainability of results at the individual and organizational levels for DCOs, PE and RVs. However, the financial viability/sustainability of some of the DCOs remains an issue.

Sustainability of Results for DCOs: DCOs in all four countries visited reported that they have benefited from the presence and contributions of the volunteers, and that they continue to benefit from such contributions in their enhanced credibility or visibility, new systems, and new ways of thinking and working. In Burkina Faso, Bolivia and Ghana, most of the DCOs were NGOs and CBOs, which made it easier to assess

> In Burkina Faso and Ghana, new programs (ATT, ASS), new products (Song Taaba) and expanded programs (WISE, Dakupa) continue to develop. Some new programs have become a significant part of the organization (HIV/AIDS work of SEMUS).
>
> In Vietnam, most DCOs are government departments. Attitudinal change as well as skills development in such bureaucratic structures is a complex and time intensive process. VCAs working in Viet Nam are aware of the complexity and the challenges.

results and the likelihood of their sustainability. In Vietnam, the DCOs were mainly local units of large centralized government bureaucracies, making it more difficult to assess the longer-term sustainability of some of the results.

However, the financial viability/sustainability of the DCOs themselves, especially NGOs,[48] is problematic. Many of these non-government DCOs operate on project-by-project funding with no assured organizational funding or financial base. This issue is being addressed in some instances by the VCAs (e.g. through organizational support to address financial viability issues; assistance with broadening their funding base, etc.) but it remains an important concern for the medium term for many of the DCOs.

All three VCAs had specific measures in place to ensure that they consider the longer-term sustainability of their volunteer cooperation interventions, but this varied from one agency to another. At the least, volunteer job descriptions/project descriptions include post-placement plans that address how to build on or ensure the sustainability of placement results. One of the VCAs, Oxfam-Québec, had carried out a more elaborate organizational diagnostic of some of its partner DCOs. This diagnostic tool addresses various dimensions of organizational capacity including the financial position and financial autonomy of the DCO.

To the extent that the VCAs are adopting programs with capacity development objectives for their partner DCOs, they should refine their organizational assessment methodology and diagnostic tools to allow them to better assess the DCO's status and needs with regard to longer-term sustainability. Although the VCA might not have the resources or capacity to address all the DCO's needs on its own, and often might be only one of many international partners supporting the DCO, a better understanding of the DCO's circumstances will ensure that VCA interventions are appropriate and that they contribute to the DCO's sustainability.

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[48] CBOs have the potential of being financially somewhat less vulnerable because of their membership base, especially if the membership succeeds in lifting itself out of poverty; GOs can usually depend on government funding.

The issue of sustainability also comes into play at a broader level in terms of the sustainability of the impacts of other ODA interventions in these countries (e.g. poverty reduction strategies; decentralization processes) that depend on the presence of a strong and healthy civil society. As such, the work of VCAs should be seen as critical to the sustainability of the overall ODA effort.

Sustainability of Results of Public Engagement As noted previously, the public engagement activities of VCAs are at a relatively nascent stage. Of the various programs we reviewed, only Oxfam-Québec's program was sufficiently developed to warrant an in-depth review of the sustainability of results. This review offers a couple of insights that might benefit other VCAs.

One insight relates to the obvious value of having a cohesive public engagement strategy in place, and using the strategy to guide VCA public engagement activities. Oxfam-Québec's strategy is particularly comprehensive, in that it is multi-pronged and multi-faceted with clear goals and clear target audiences (workers and youth are the key groups targeted by Oxfam-Québec). Further evidence of its comprehensiveness was that no missed opportunities were noted in any of the interviews or documentation review. Without such a strategy, there is a real danger that PE investments, while well-intentioned, will be scattered, which reduces the likelihood of sustainability.

A second insight relates to how an organization decides to implement its PE strategy. In Oxfam-Québec's case, it worked jointly with other civil society organizations in strategic and formal partnerships. Its choice of partner organizations significantly contributed to greater results and successes, as the partners complemented each other with unique features and expertise. Through its strategic partnerships it

> Sometimes results were sustained even when an individual attended only one PE event – for example, one woman who attended an Oxfam-Québec event went on to open a coffee shop that promoted fair trade and Oxfam-Québec's work.
>
> Overall, however, results were found to be more sustainable when associated activities were part of a cohesive public engagement strategy.
>
> While it is possible that the woman identified above could have started a coffee shop promoting fair trade without Oxfam-Québec, its broader fair trade strategy, working groups, partnerships, and range of fair trade educational material definitely supported the results.

> **Oxfam-Québec penetrated the youth market in Québec** by working in formal partnership with Club 2/3 and Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ).
>
> Its educational campaigns and initiatives concern the environment, responsible citizenship, poverty, and fair trade. As just one example of the result of this work, many school children across Québec now use fair trade chocolate when doing school fundraisers. Its partnership with CSQ offers Oxfam-Québec access to approximately 900 schools. Club 2/3's expertise and experience has enabled Oxfam-Québec to work jointly in the development of programs that can be integrated into Québec's newly developed school curriculum. Such initiatives support the long-term sustainability of results; for years to come, students and youth across the province may benefit from Oxfam-Québec's international expertise and experience.

offers its partners tremendous expertise and international experience and gains critical access to target communities and audiences within Quebec. By partnering with groups such as AQOCI, Oxfam-Québec also quickly expands the number of potential partners with whom it may work on any given campaign. In our view, results associated with such types of partnerships had the most far-reaching results in terms of sustainability.

VCAs partnerships appear to have a "snowball" effect, resulting in new programs, new projects, new partnerships, new campaigns, new volunteer groups, new sectors of the Canadian population reached, and new support for VCAs' work. Only two of the thirteen partnerships examined in this study did not lead to new momentum or activities (see further discussion in section 4.5.4 on Partnership).

In our view, there are several ways that VCAs could improve the sustainability of PE results:

- The development of a clear PE strategy that clearly outlines its areas of focus and identifies the target audiences or groups that the VCA wants to reach. The strategy should be reviewed and

refined regularly with all staff, volunteers, board members and the general public so that there is strong consensus on VCA PE objectives.

- The utilization of untapped potential found in RVs and other Canadian volunteers interested in getting involved. VCAs should ensure, however, that adequate staffing and resources are allocated to manage volunteers.

- Greater emphasis on follow-up, to support the momentum of activities and longevity of results.

- The utilization of multi-faceted campaigns, in which different kinds of activities reinforce one another and draw in different segments of the Canadian public.

- The selection of institutional partners that offer VCAs access to a wider segment of the Canadian population – especially identified target communities.

- The decision to work closely with and through umbrella organizations, such as provincial councils, which expand the number of potential partners with whom VCAs may work, encourage inter-agency cooperation and increase VCA profile among NGO community at the regional level.

Sustainability of Results on Volunteers: The experience of volunteering in a developing country is a life changing experience. RVs speak of how their experiences continued to affect their lives in profound ways, from the moment they embarked on their placements to years after their return. When volunteers return from their placements, the changes they have experienced can often manifest through "reverse culture shock,"– a number of interviewees reported a sense of disenchantment with development and anger toward the inequalities in the world. This, though, seems to be part of the overall experience as recognizing the drastic difference in the life they lead in Canada compared to the one they left behind overseas helps solidify their metamorphosis. Interviewees also report that over time, and with reflection, the feelings of despair are replaced with a desire to stay involved. It is here that the results of being a volunteer become sustainable at the individual level. As noted earlier in the report, RVs report recognizing the continued importance of their experience on choices they make in terms of lifestyle, consumerism, education, career, and their interests and pursuits. RVs also reported the continuing effect on how they interact with people from different backgrounds, understand politics and international development, and live in their communities. They speak to a commitment to a more equitable world and a desire to work toward achieving it. In this sense, the results on the RVs add to the sustainability of the VCAs themselves, in that many RVs continue to contribute time or money to these organizations.

4.5.3 Cost Effectiveness of Volunteer Cooperation

One of the objectives of this review was to examine the effectiveness of volunteer cooperation from an economic (cost-effective) point of view. A review of program cost-effectiveness normally considers whether the relationship between costs and benefits is reasonable. While analysis of cost-effectiveness of development programs is often a challenge, it is particularly difficult in this case since putting an accurate monetary value on volunteerism has not been a focus of economists and planners, and few benchmarks exist. Moreover, since VCP encompasses various types of expected benefits

> It is possible that the lack of recognition of volunteerism reflects the failure, over decades, of economists and planners to take sufficient account of the informal sector in general…. the difficulty in assigning "real or accurate " monetary values to volunteers' contribution has obscured the actual importance to national development.
>
> UN Volunteers, Volunteerism and Capacity Development, 2002, p. 3

(results) for a number of different target groups (including DCOs, VCAs, CIDA, the Canadian public, and the volunteers themselves), this contributes to a myriad of potential units of analysis and therefore comparisons. Such types of analysis can be expensive and time-consuming, particularly since many of the results tend to be of a qualitative rather than a quantitative nature.

As a result of these challenges, CIDA agreed that this review would instead summarize review findings vis-à-vis the value-added of volunteer cooperation (see sidebar), and assist CIDA and other VCP stakeholders in identifying how they might assess volunteer cooperation program cost-effectiveness in the future.

> What value-added does volunteer cooperation yield (e.g. leveraged contributions by VCAs and/or their stakeholders in Canada and/or overseas) that other types of CIDA supported interventions do not bring?

Finding 33: There is strong evidence that CIDA-supported volunteer cooperation programs are highly valued by and generating considerable benefits for domestic and international stakeholders. However, VCAs and CIDA have been remiss in systematically tracking, reporting on, and taking pride in such benefits.

Data collected during our review suggests that volunteer cooperation is generating a variety of important benefits for a number of VCP stakeholders in developing countries and in Canada. As demonstrated in Exhibit 4.5, significant benefits have accrued to developing countries, Canada as a whole, the Canadian public, returned volunteers, and VCAs, to name a few. Our review found some missed opportunities, which, if addressed, could increase these benefits further.

While clear benefits exist and are well known to those most intimately involved with the program, they are not well known outside the program. As suggested in section 4.5.2, there are some mixed beliefs about the value of the program for various historical and other reasons. It is also consistent with a Canadian tendency to being modest about achievements rather than celebrating them. This is in sharp contrast to the attitudes of countries such as Australia (see sidebar).

> Australia proudly states, *International volunteering has an inherent value and adds a qualitative value to Australia's aid and development program.*
>
> Inherent values are articulated as follows:
>
> i) Engaging the Australian public to participate in the aid program; to gain a better understanding of other cultures, regional issues and development challenges; generate a more supportive constituency for the aid program; provide a human face of the aid program and Australian identity; and present an opportunity for its neighbors to learn more about Australia and Australians.
>
> ii) Providing Australia with a pool of persons with first-hand international development experience and a resource pool for aid and development organizations, business and government.
>
> iii) Complementing AusAid's bilateral program.
>
> AusAID Volunteer Policy Issues paper p.1-3 (January 2004)

To combat ongoing reservations about the program, the onus is on the VCAs and CPB to identify and utilize meaningful ways to track and communicate its results. Potential ways of thinking about this are explored in the next finding.

Exhibit 4.5 Summary of VCP Added-Value to Stakeholders

EXAMPLES OF ADDED VALUE OF VOLUNTEER COOPERATION	EXAMPLES OF MISSED OPPORTUNITIES
Developing Countries	
Interviewed DCOs report significant positive changes to their organizational culture, systems, processes, programs, visibility, viability and reputations. (see section 4.2) Moreover, DCOs report that the involvement of volunteers (rather than other types of development professionals) bring not only technical skills and expertise but additional specific benefits, that enhance their value to the DCOs including: ▪ New visions and energy which can influence DCOs in positive ways ▪ Strong commitment, integrity, discipline, work ethic, model behaviors that inspire DCO staff ▪ Innovative approaches that are adapted to the local context ▪ Securing/leveraging additional resources Government representatives of developing countries (Burkina Faso and Ghana) noted the following benefits of international volunteer cooperation: ▪ There continue to be areas of capacity shortages, and volunteers bring important skills and experience which help address these. They also bring new blood and energize the agencies and communities with which they work. ▪ Volunteers are witnesses to the true reality of our countries; they help rectify the distorted image presented by the international media which focuses on ethnic tensions, wars and desperate poverty; volunteers advocate for better understanding, solidarity & support for our country ▪ Given the government's policy of decentralization, volunteer organizations play an important role in strengthening civil society organizations.	The DCO study noted that the lack of support and programming funds for volunteers engaged in capacity building programs has several limitations (see section 5.2.3) which can reduce the potential value: ▪ Sometimes VCAs have their hands tied because they are not able to provide any small funding support along with the volunteers, limiting the VCA's flexibility and the volunteer's effectiveness. ▪ In one instance, the DCO deplored the effort invested in an organizational assessment and strategic planning activities given the limited resources to follow-up on the results of these studies
Canada	
Canadian public awareness, understanding and action VCA public engagement activities have also provided some concrete ways for individual Canadians and Canadian organizations to become aware of and involved in international development. As noted in Section 4.3, interviewees identified results for both themselves and at the organizational level. PE activities increased individual Canadians' knowledge of international development and motivated them to get involved in global issues. At the organizational level, results were seen in terms of increased knowledge of, involvement in, and support for VCAs and to international cooperation work. VCA programs produce approximately 2500 more globally aware citizens for Canada each year. This group has the potential of "spreading the word" to thousands of their immediate contacts (family, friends, community members and co-workers) and thus fostering more globally aware Canadian citizens across Canada. **Human Face of Canada** The field visits revealed that the gender and ethnic mix of volunteers placed by all VCAs overseas gives a human, 'Canadian' face to Canada's development program: the mix of young and older, male and female, Francophone and Anglophone, combined with a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds are a reflection of the new Canada and the multicultural society it has become. Some view international volunteers as "grassroots ambassadors" for Canada, enhancing Canada's reputation overseas. **Volunteerism in Canada**; Most surveyed volunteers report that they remain committed to volunteerism and continue to give their time to different organizations, causes, or their communities, which is an important benefit to Canada. **Pool of human resources**: In the past, volunteer cooperation programs generated skilled, experienced personnel for CIDA and other organizations engaged in international development (e.g. NGOs, consulting firms). The extent to which this is still the case was not a specific focus of this review. Some returned volunteers have joined the ranks of international organizations, which support Canada's role internationally. **Build global civil society networks:** As noted in sections 4.2 and 4.3, volunteer	Other sections of this report note some lost opportunities associated with VCA's mixed effectiveness in harnessing RVs in VCA public engagement activities (see section 4.3)

EXAMPLES OF ADDED VALUE OF VOLUNTEER COOPERATION	EXAMPLES OF MISSED OPPORTUNITIES
cooperation programs have helped other organizations develop links, connections and access to strong partner organizations in the South. Together, they have engaged in public debate on economic, social and cultural issues working at various levels from local communities to more global fora (e.g. women's rights and gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, equitable trade, etc.).	
Returned volunteers	
Section 4.4 reported significant benefits for individual RVs in terms of their values, choice of careers and education. Over 50% of surveyed/interviewed RVs are working or continuing to volunteer in the field of international or community development. RVs report that they have a greater cross-cultural understanding, strengthening Canada's multi-cultural society.	A national registry or forum for returned international volunteers could be one way to develop/support this untapped important resource, or social capital
VCAs	
Several VCAs use returned volunteers to recruit and/or orient new volunteers and assist with other program related activities (such as public engagement) and reduce their operational costs.	

Finding 34: Historically, the costs and benefits of international volunteering have focused on the volunteer placement as the primary unit of analysis. While VCA program designs and expected results have changed considerably, stakeholders continue to rely on this no longer appropriate unit of analysis.

For the first 20 to 40 years of volunteer sending, there was considerable emphasis on the costs and benefits of volunteers placed. However, in the past few years, there has been a major evolution in the design of VCA programs, particularly in terms of the emphasis on expected developmental results in the South through capacity development, as well as expected results in the North of public engagement activities. Thus, in examining cost-effectiveness, it would seem important for stakeholders to identify appropriate foci that reflect the new paradigm(s). However, this is not the case. Interviews and document reviews carried out for this study indicate that old ways of thinking prevail. For example, as part of the preparatory work for the VCP submission to TBS in 2003/04, CIDA supplied TBS with information on the costs per volunteer placement by VCA. The budgets of the current set of VCA agreements are based in large part on the projected costs of a volunteer person-year, rather than say, the average cost of a DCO capacity building program or a public engagement program.

In our view, VCP stakeholders need to review and clarify a number of important variables in order to determine the correct basis for assessing the costs and benefits of VCP in the future. These include:

- **Clarifying the unit(s) of analysis:** With the increased emphasis on development results in the past few years, it has become increasingly accepted that the volunteer is a means and not the end result in development cooperation activities.[49] Thus efforts to compare the costs of volunteer sending (as the numerator) to the number of volunteers sent (the denominator) misses the point – the denominator needs to be conceptualized differently. Perhaps, as illustrated in the previous finding, the unit of analysis should be organizations that receive support for capacity development, or developing countries that are targeted – a number of possibilities exist.

- **Clarifying expected benefits:** The previous finding illustrated some of the types of benefits that are currently emanating from the VCP. CIDA and the VCAs need to review and revisit their own planning frameworks (see also section 5.3.2) to ensure that current frameworks are emphasizing the right kinds of benefits.

Once these are clarified, VCP stakeholders need to:

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[49] Notable exceptions would be programs aimed at youth exchange, cultural awareness or skill development.

- **Compare benefits across similar types of programs**: Since the results of different volunteer cooperation programs vary, it is important to note that costs and benefits should only be compared across organizations if they share common results. For example, CIDA and VCAs may feel that it makes little sense to compare CWY and CUSO programs in terms of developing countries, but they may be comparable for other purposes (effect on returned volunteers' careers).

- **Evaluate the costs and assess the benefits:** Calculating the costs may be a relatively more straightforward exercise for some of these result areas. However, identifying the benefits may be more of an art than a science. Linked to this will be the need to resolve issues of attribution in addition to the more complicated task of assigning a value on units of analysis, using economic equivalencies.

- **Clarify responsibilities, schedules and resources for tracking and communication:** There is a need for CIDA and VCAs to clarify and assign responsibilities and schedules for tracking, monitoring, reporting and other forms of communication, and for ensuring that resources (time and money) are set aside for same. Otherwise, the difficulties experienced to date in getting the message out are likely to continue.

In conclusion, CIDA and the VCAs need to revisit what, how, when and by whom the costs and benefits of volunteer cooperation will be tracked and reported in the future.

4.5.4 Partnership

Finding 35: VCP involves a large number of Northern and Southern stakeholders that engage in the program in different ways. For the most part, relationships among these stakeholders are strengthened over time, which ultimately enhances the performance of the program. There is room for improvement in some of these relationships.

A myriad of stakeholders and relationships are involved directly or indirectly in VCP, including Canadian and developing country governments, VCAs, civil society organizations and networks in developing countries and Canada (see sidebar).

Our analysis suggests that there have been major changes in how various sub-groups of these organizations have interacted over time. For the most part, these changes have been positive, with relationships becoming more strategic, focused, institutionalized and longer term over time. Of the various relationships examined in this review, a few deserve particular mention: relationships i) between the DCOs and VCAs; ii) between VCAs and other Canadian civil society organizations; iii) between CIDA and the VCAs; and iv) among the VCAs, These are examined below.

> **Examples of VCP Stakeholder Relationships**
>
> VCAs – Developing country organizations
>
> VCAs – Canadian civil society organizations
>
> VCAs in Canada
>
> Canadian VCAs in developing countries
>
> CIDA – VCAs
>
> FAC – VCAs
>
> VCAs – RVs
>
> Plus various combinations and permutations of above

Based on a review of VCA programming over the past 30 years, relationships with DCOs have evolved considerably over time (see Exhibit 4.6). The information collected during field visits indicates that **relationships between DCOs and VCAs** are positive (see sidebar); DCOs noted that VCAs play an important facilitation/convenor role with partner DCOs working in the same field (e.g. HIV/AIDS in Burkina Faso and Ghana; shea butter in Burkina Faso; to a certain extent, around the issue of local economic development in Bolivia) allowing for the sharing of experience, strategies and concerns, and for synergy and joint actions to develop among DCOs and thus foster local ownership and enhanced performance by these organizations.

Words used by interviewed DCOs to describe their relationships with VCAs[50]
Respectful and supportive
Open, accessible, with regular follow-up; highly interactive and stimulating
Substantive, not just administrative
Based on trust that has been built over time and shared objectives (e.g. fight against poverty; strengthening community, improving community well-being)
One of mutual learning and sharing
Provides DCOs a broader perspective on the world
Provides DCOs with access to other funding agencies

Exhibit 4.6   Changes in VCA-DCO Relationships

1960s-1970s	1980s-1990s	2000s
Volunteer-focused; addressing manpower shortage mostly with government Stand alone Often limited to volunteer placement term (3 mo. to 2 yrs)	Shifting to support to civil society organizations Mostly one-on-one VCA-DCO partnerships; some global networking/alliances Sometimes involving other support and longer term relationship	Inter-organizational knowledge sharing and solidarity/reciprocity Sectoral and integrated Multi-organizational involving numbers of Canadian and DC organizations Longer term

In the case of Vietnam, the situation is somewhat different, due to the nature of the partners (government agencies). The DCOs see themselves more as recipients than as partners. Moreover, the multi-partner placement approach used by one VCA (one volunteer working with many partners) has tended to limit the depth of relationships, especially

One VCA working on a bilateral project in Vietnam actively involved the staff of the primary stakeholders in the identification, planning, implementation and monitoring of project activities, ensuring in this way that they were active participants and not mere recipients.

when the DCOs are departments or units within a large bureaucracy. However, there are some positive exceptions (see sidebar).

It is noteworthy that all VCAs have been increasing the emphasis on inter-organizational agreements in which the long-term commitment between the VCA and the DCO is clearly defined. All VCAs have memoranda of understanding with counterparts in which the roles and responsibilities of both parties are well described and understood; traditionally these

Many volunteers (from all VCAs) noted that a placement that starts with some involvement in a like-minded organization in Canada can serve as the basis for longer lasting linkages and can add a lot to the placement. Being part of a sectoral network or alliances can also be the basis for an important contribution.

were focused on the volunteer placement (and separate project funds when these were being provided) but increasingly they reflect the broader and longer-term (e.g. five years) nature of their relationship. This increases program performance by encouraging long term sustainable development, rather than one-off, ad hoc support.

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[50] Based on interviews with DCOs in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana in November- December 2004

Relationships between VCAs and other Canadian civil society organizations have also been strengthened over time. Working in partnerships has strengthened VCAs relationships with other Canadian organizations and increased both partners' abilities and expertise. Increasingly VCAs try to recruit volunteers from organizations in Canada that are dealing with similar issues, because their experience is more relevant.

> The Association African Solidarité (AAS) in Ouagadougou and Maison Plein Coeur (MPC) in Montreal have a long term relationship which is proving of mutual benefit to both. AAS is benefiting from MPC's experience and success with ensuring observance of anti-retro-viral protocols; MPC will be better able to reach out to community members of African origin.

As a result, some longer term relationships are formed between VCAs and other Canadian organizations. When it is not possible to recruit volunteers directly from a Canadian organization, the VCAs encourage the volunteers to establish links with appropriate civil society organizations prior to their departure.

As noted above, VCAs have moved to more sustained relationship with southern counterparts and have also begun to create more organic linkages with Canadian organizations. At some point, the VCAs and CIDA may want to compare the results from cooperation between similar North and South organizations that have a common mandate or interest (e.g. education-teachers associations) versus VCAs.

From all accounts, the **relationship between CIDA and the VCAs** has evolved from strained and mistrustful relations in the mid to late 1990s, to the positive, collaborative, and professional relationships of the present. The credit for stepping above past differences and developing a more constructive, transparent relationship goes to senior decision makers at CIDA (including the President, several Vice Presidents and the Director General), several Ministers responsible for CIDA, and the Executive Directors of the VCAs. Many people feel that this positive relationship remains vulnerable as it is based on the positive attitudes and cooperation of individuals. The challenge now is to institutionalize the relationship by creating systems and a culture of collaboration among the VCAs and CIDA and CIDA representatives overseas.

One area for improvement identified in this review was the need for more systematic collaboration between individual VCAs and representatives of CIDA, Canadian Embassies, and High Commissions overseas. Generally the Post (CIDA in the field) is aware of the VCAs [51] but does not have much knowledge about what the VCAs are doing – unless a VCA is involved in a specific bilateral project (e.g. Vietnam) or is drawing on a funding

> **Improving Overseas Collaboration**
>
> The Post could play the role of facilitator/ convenor of VCAs and other Canadian organizations supported by CPB. The purpose would be to provide a forum where program directions and innovative practices could be shared amongst VCAs and Canadian NGOs to avoid duplication and enhance each others work.
>
> This could lead to interesting alliances between Canadian NGOs and VCAs, between their partner DCOs, and possibly to joint project proposals that draw on the complementary capacities and experiences of VCAs and Canadian NGOs. For the Post it would provide hands-on experience in dealing with Canadian civil society and, as such, serve as an example to the host country.

mechanism established in a country (e.g. Burkina Faso). In some cases, the consular section of the Embassy seems to be more aware of VCAs because of cooperant security concerns following the events of September 11, 2001. In some countries (Vietnam and, in the past/soon to be re-instituted, in Burkina Faso) there are regular (quarterly, yearly) meetings of all elements of Canada's aid program in the country. These meetings provide a venue for all parties to share information and important issues regarding Canada's ODA. Similar opportunities would be welcomed by VCAs in other countries.

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[51] In two countries visited, the aid team had changed, and the new team had not yet met with the VCAs.

The relationships **among the VCAs** have also evolved considerably over time. Historically, individual VCAs were powerful, relatively well-resourced organizations. Most had individual bilateral relationships with CIDA and other donors, and did not collaborate formally amongst themselves. The VCAs started to interact more around 1992 in response to a threat that CIDA support for volunteer sending would disappear. Six volunteer sending organizations (CUSO, CESO, CECI, WUSC, Oxfam-Québec/OCSD, SUCO) banded together and engaged a consultant (Michel Amar) to assist them in analyzing and documenting the strengths of their volunteering sending programs.[52] Collaboration among the VCAs continued on an ad hoc basis but increased considerably since 2000 and particularly in the past three years in response to some difficulties that many individual VCAs were having with CIDA related to contract and other management matters. The Executive Directors of ten VCAs worked together closely around common issues

> *We use this example (of the positive collaboration among the VCAs) to our other members, to illustrate the gains from such collaboration* (CCIC representative)
>
> *We (the NGO community) see the group of VCAs as a model, not a threat (to the NGO community). We have not organized ourselves in the same way!* (Leader of a Canadian NGO)

and presented a united front to CIDA. This collaboration was well received and continues today; it is seen by others interviewed in the Canadian NGO community as a positive step that should be replicated by other NGOs. Moreover, while the Executive Directors of the VCAs use this forum to manage corporate issues with CIDA, they have established other working groups of VCA officers who work together on areas of common interest (e.g. recruitment, orientation, selection of volunteers and, more recently, public engagement).

One area for improvement relates to the degree of collaboration overseas among VCAs. Although there was no duplication, overlap, or work at counter purposes noted in the countries visited, there were areas where VCAs could benefit from greater sharing among themselves – for example, in Burkina Faso around HIV/AIDS (CECI and CUSO) and the production and marketing of shea butter (CECI and Oxfam-Québec).

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[52] *Effects of Canadian Volunteer Sending* Strategic Planning Associates and CAC International (1994)

5. Volunteer Cooperation Management

5.1 Overview

This chapter presents an assessment of how VCAs and CIDA have managed volunteer cooperation over the past five years. Given that VCP is in the early stages of becoming a program, we have given particular attention to identifying areas for improvement.

In section 5.2, we review how VCAs have managed their volunteer cooperation. The analysis focuses on local capacity building in developing countries and public engagement in Canada, and how VCAs manage volunteer resources in the context of these two components. Our evidence is drawn from an overall assessment of VCA management across all VCAs, complemented by more in-depth assessments of the DCO capacity building programs of three VCAs (CECI, CUSO and Oxfam-Québec) and of the public engagement programs of five VCAs (CECI, CUSO, CESO, Oxfam-Québec, CWY).

In Section 5.3 we review how CIDA has managed its investments in volunteer cooperation, and flag areas for improvement.

5.2 VCA Management

5.2.1 Planning and Design

Finding 36: Over the past five years, the VCAs have made (and are continuing to make) concentrated efforts to update their programs in response to the demands of the changing context. In general, they have made greater progress in the planning and design of overseas capacity building programs than for domestic public engagement programs.

As noted in Section 3.0, there have been significant changes in the international and national contexts in the past five years, with implications for VCA programming. One important change is the increased demand for results-based planning. Based on our review of VCA planning documents, all VCAs reviewed have largely adopted RBM approaches and are developing their program plans to respond to CIDA requirements. Six of the seven VCA frameworks reviewed distinguish between public engagement and DCO capacity building programs, and have separate planning sheets, frameworks and results.

In terms of the three **DCO local capacity building programs,** our review found that VCAs (CECI, CUSO and Oxfam-Québec) have made serious efforts to update programs in response to the changing context. For example:

> All VCAs have planning frameworks reflecting their result logic in terms of linkages between activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. All are using the same CIDA framework to capture the results, indicators and risks for their programs.
>
> VCAs have identified performance indicators for their results that are to guide the data collection on performance and support performance reporting.
>
> VCAs have situated their programs with CIDA's programming priorities, Key Agency Results, Social Development Priorities, Sustainable Development Strategies and the MDGs.

- The VCAs have adjusted their program/project planning and reporting tools and systems (which includes preparation of results-based planning sheets for their projects, quite sophisticated volunteer placement description sheets, and internal reporting and evaluation tools) to reflect the process and language of CIDA's RBM.

- CUSO, Oxfam-Québec and Uniterra all have well-developed tools and systems to support program decision-making (around priorities, choice of partners and projects, etc.), planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- The three VCAs ensure programmatic cohesion and integrity by the definition of programs/projects within which placements and DCO capacity development interventions are situated (see sidebar).

Although they range in level of detail, on the whole, the designs of local capacity building programs are logical and clear. The challenge faced by the VCA field offices is often one of limited time and resources: how to ensure that the effort invested in the planning and design of interventions (and their monitoring and reporting) is commensurate with the level of resources being invested by the VCA (often not the only international partner of the DCO) in the program. A critical consideration in the design process is to ensure that the partner DCO fully subscribes to the objectives and has taken ownership of the process and activities. In this respect, all three VCAs ensured DCO active participation in design and ownership of results.

In terms of the five **PE programs**, with the exception of Oxfam-Québec, the other reviewed VCAs did not have public engagement strategies in place until recently.[53] Our review of the established and relatively new PE programs and strategies suggests that the VCAs are developing programs appropriate to the context, as shown below:

- In keeping with the increased emphasis on RBM, most VCAs have defined performance frameworks for their PE programs.

- Most of the VCAs under review have formulated or begun to formulate PE strategies to focus their efforts more strategically on key thematic areas. These efforts vary in their level of complexity, with some groups still trying to find a PE niche for themselves.

- The majority of the VCAs are building their PE programs based on lessons learned and self-evaluations of their public engagement activities in the past – suggesting the integration of evaluative approaches to their programs (see sidebar).

Examples of changes in reviewed DCO programs

Placements are seldom stand-alone placements anymore.

Usually a number of placements are housed within an issue or sector specific project or program (e.g. HIV/AIDS, community economic development, gender equality).

Increasingly such programs involve more than one partner DCO within the country, and sometimes a program is part of a larger regional program or even a VCA-wide program.

Projects/programs are generally well-defined with a clear rationale, objective, expected results and so forth.

Increasingly, the VCAs enter longer term (e.g. 5 yrs) agreements with DCOs, that may include multiple placements (dedicated or multi-partner), financial support and other organizational support.

CECI PE Strategy Based on Lessons Learned

One highly effective PE strategy CECI has identified was supporting volunteers to communicate with their home communities via the local community media before, during and after returning from a volunteer placement – while overseas, some volunteers wrote bi-weekly or monthly articles in the local paper.

This proved to be a valuable way of engaging community members – they keenly followed their volunteer's stories, learned a great deal about the international development context in which the volunteer was living and working, and were motivated to get involved and support the volunteer or CECI's work. It also had the effect of providing a great deal of support within the community for volunteers returning home and adjusting to life in Canada once again.

CECI recognizes the value of this approach and is integrating it into its new PE programming.

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[53] As noted earlier, VCAs were not explicitly funded by CIDA to carry out public engagement activities until 2004. At the time of writing, VCA strategies were in varying stages of development.

Until recently, the design logic for PE programs has been implicit (except for Oxfam-Québec which developed explicit PE strategies). In many cases, VCA public engagement activities are based on opportunity rather than strategy – for example, when a representative from a DCO comes to Canada on a visit, the VCA organizes an event at which this representative can talk to Canadians about their work with this VCA. Nevertheless, we found in our interviews that VCAs are clear and logical about the PE activities they select, even when these are responsive or opportunistic. Interestingly, their logic closely mirrors CIDA's 1999 public engagement strategy – to move individuals along a continuum, from "basic awareness of international cooperation through understanding to personal involvement and informed action." All of the VCAs have looked at their range of public engagement activities with a view to supporting Canadians to gain more awareness of international cooperation, greater openness to other cultures, and to support them to act, based on this increased knowledge. Oxfam-Québec goes one step further, with the explicit goal of mobilizing the Quebecois to act as responsible citizens.

Making the distinction between local capacity development and public engagement programs and results has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the strategies to achieve results linked to each of the two components may be clearer to design and implement, as activities can be aligned with the appropriate component. On the other hand, creating a clear divide between the two components misses opportunities for developing horizontal linkages that demonstrate how both components lead to the achievement of the program goals. In the case of CWY, which states that all of its work in Canada has constituted public engagement work, it would seem neither possible nor desirable to fully segregate PE programming from the rest of its programming.[54] Such integration could prove to be a real strength – offering opportunities for public engagement in every aspect of CWY programming.

Our review suggests that there is some room for improvement in a few areas:

The **results frameworks** for the local capacity building component and the PE component vary considerably in length and number of outcomes (see sidebar). One concern is that the programs appear ambitious and somewhat unfocused, trying to reflect the variety of sectors, themes and countries that they work in rather than focus on the overarching purpose and results of their specific programs.

Review of 7 VCA Results Frameworks

Number of impacts range from 3 to 6

Number of outcomes for volunteer programming range from 6 to 100

Number of outcomes for PE range from 4 to 20

Results Frameworks range in length from 4 to 20 pages for the volunteer programming, and from 1 to 5 pages for PE

Types of expected results in PE programs: VCAs generally undertake Public Engagement activities for reasons such as raising Canadians' awareness about development issues and challenges, increasing Canadian public support for international development, or increasing actions by the Canadian public related to international development. However, in our review of seven PE frameworks prepared by VCAs, we noticed that the majority (five) of these frameworks include results that focus

Examples of PE Indicators

Number of new volunteers who join the VCA as a result of having read an article about the VCA experience, or having attended a meeting at which a speech was given by a VCA staff member

Recognition of program merits and uniqueness by MPs (no. of times an MP mentions VCA's work in Parliament)

on promotion of the VCA (see sidebar), its programs and/or of volunteer cooperation. While VCAs are entitled to promote themselves and/or volunteer cooperation, we are not convinced that these are appropriate results for PE activities. While some might argue that these are appropriate short-term results,

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[54] CWY's program budget is provided according to the same two components as other VCAs.

the PE results framework would also need to identify the expected long-term results related to public engagement.

The ambitious nature of the programs affects the costs of **systems to track performance**. Ideally, each result statement should have no more than two to three indicators identified to measure progress. However, since most of the planning sheets we reviewed have an extensive list of results at the outcome and output levels, development of even two indicators for each result leads to an extensive list of indicators (at least half of the planning sheets have more than 50 indicators for measuring outcome and outputs across the PE and local capacity building components). This can become prohibitive in terms of cost and effort of tracking performance. It is important to minimize the burden of VCAs' Southern partners for tracking and reporting, as they have the least capacity to deal with increased accountability measures.

Matching results and indicators: While half of the reviewed VCAs have identified too many results and indicators, the other half have identified few indicators (e.g. one VCA has identified seven outcome results but only four indicators, and we found it difficult to identify which indicator measured which result). The paucity of indicators can create potential difficulties in tracking and measuring results achievement. Moreover, in some instances the indicators do not measure the actual results (e.g. one indicator measures the number of girls able to attend school, yet none of the results focuses on improving girls' access to schooling).

Focus on quantitative indicators: VCAs make an effort to identify qualitative as well as quantitative indicators to measure achievements, which is positive. However, our review suggests an overall tendency to employ quantitative indicators more frequently than qualitative indicators (e.g. one outcome level result identified eight quantitative indicators to measure progress).

Public engagement indicators: Our review of the indicators used for the PE component suggests that some VCAs are having difficulty designing indicators to effectively measure changes in public awareness and action. Rather than measuring change, the indicators frequently focus on descriptive or input-related indicators, such as the number of times the volunteer or staff member is involved in public engagement activities, the number of activities the VCA delivered, the number of participants in the events, and so on. This also suggests that the VCAs may be having some difficulties in finding appropriate data sources and even methodologies to track the results of their PE efforts. This is part of a larger challenge related to measuring the effects of PE activities overall, and may be addressed in CIDA's new PE strategy. CIDA may wish to develop a set of indicators and measurement strategies to measure PE results and share those with the VCAs and others. In addition, specific funds may need to be set aside to track the PE effects of CIDA and VCAs.

Finding 37: While VCP emphasizes organizational capacity building as a developmental approach, VCA resources, approaches, tools and skills in capacity development are evolving and mixed.

Organizational capacity development interventions have become the norm for most VCAs in recent years, mirroring the popularity of such approaches in other development programs. However, while VCA program descriptions indicate that they have adopted this approach, some VCAs have made more progress than others in the development of capacity development methodologies, tools and skills.

In our view, volunteers are essential but are not necessarily the only resource needed to build capacity. Other types of support and improvements could help strengthen capacity development interventions, as illustrated below:

Capacity Building/Organizational Development Tools: One area that requires some attention with some VCAs (CECI, CUSO) is the development of specific diagnostic and assessment tools and other organizational development (OD) tools. Now that capacity building of partner DCOs has become a core objective of their programs, refining the methodologies and OD tools that they use will be critical to ensure greater effectiveness. Many such

> In Burkina Faso, Oxfam-Québec has used organizational diagnostic tools to assess DCOs that it planned to support in the context of various organizational development funds[55] it was managing as part of its country program. Because substantial financial resources were being invested, such interventions justified and made possible a greater investment of time and effort.
>
> CUSO, on the other hand, having little financial resources at its disposal for its Burkina Faso program, carries out a much more limited assessment of its partner DCOs in the preparation of volunteer placement descriptions.

tools exist, including self-assessment tools and approaches for NGOs and CBOs, so there is no need to re-invent the wheel. Existing tools could be easily adapted to the VCAs needs.

Volunteer Support Funds: VCA capacity to provide financial support for the programmatic objectives of volunteer placements varies from one VCA to another. In Burkina Faso, representatives of all three VCAs reported significant decreases in the funds that could be provided to volunteers due to financial constraints. However, both CECI and Oxfam-Québec continue to have a nominal volunteer support fund whereas CUSO does not.[56] Within the current contractual agreements with CIDA, few financial resources are available to support the work of volunteers apart from the orientation/training, travel and some of the living costs (accommodation, living allowance, health, etc.). Although DCOs generally contribute to volunteer costs for local transportation, provide a basic work space, and sometimes provide accommodation, they are not all able to provide financial support for the volunteer's activities/initiatives. Some volunteers reported that they went overseas with a specific project to accomplish, but when no program development funds were available, they had to undertake fundraising before they could do anything. In such cases, a volunteer can actually become a burden to the DCO.

Time-lag in Volunteer Recruitment: As the length of time increases between volunteer recruitment and the actual arrival of the volunteer in the field, the likelihood also increases that the context and priorities of DCOs will change, which can result in poor alignment of DCO needs and volunteer experience and skills. VCA field representatives agreed that this time factor affects efficiency and requires attention.

Support for the volunteer's capacity development role: Traditionally volunteers have played a dual role – as professionals with specific technical expertise and as facilitators with process skills. In recruiting volunteers, VCAs seek individuals who have both the specific technical/professional skills and experience required by the host DCO, and the 'people skills' that are necessary to work successfully in a developing country. (These people skills include: cross-cultural communication skills, an open and flexible attitude,

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[55] Examples of such funds managed by Oxfam-Québec in Burkina Faso over the past 2-8 years: Programme de financement de projets de développement durable; Programme de développement institutionnel (Solidarité Canada Sahel); Fonds de renforcement organisationnel (Oxfam-Québec); Fonds canadien d'intitiatives locales (Ambassade du Canada); Fonds de soutien à la programmation (Ambassade du Canada); Programme d'appui au renforcement de l'autonomie financière (Ambassade du Canada).

[56] As an indication of the reduction in such support, in Burkina Faso CECI noted that in the past many volunteers were provided with a vehicle for their work; later this was changed to the provision of a motorcycle. Now the volunteers have to purchase their own motorcycle. In 2004/05 CECI earmarked $960 and Oxfam Québec allocated $2,000 of VCP funds received from CIDA for volunteer program support. However, CUSO was not able to make such a provision. In some instances, these funds are supplemented by other funding that the VCAs identify (e.g. Canadian Embassy, other international donors) or that volunteers raise themselves. This alternative funding can sometimes be quite substantial (e.g. $50,000 or more).

an ability to adapt and to take initiative, and a willingness to be low-key, to see oneself as an equal, and to recognize that one has much to learn.)

Now that capacity development of DCOs is an explicit objective of VCAs, volunteers are being called upon to take on a third role in capacity development. VCAs need to review what changes are required to prepare volunteers for these complex and complementary roles prior to placement, and then need to ensure that volunteers are supported by competent and specialized staff or support

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Suggestions to improve the Volunteer's capacity development role

Refine/adapt methodologies to meet capacity development objectives

Adapt existing OD tools to VCAs needs

Provide DCOs with Volunteer Support Funds to help them meet specific project objectives

Improve planning to address the time-lag in volunteer recruitment and placement (VCAs could try to recruit volunteers for anticipated DCO needs)

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mechanisms once they are in place. At the least VCAs should ensure that their field representatives have received some basic training in capacity development (to provide them with an understanding of and exposure to the evolving CD models, approaches, tools and resources) and have ready access to tools and resources such as more experienced capacity development specialists.

Finding 38: Until recently, VCAs invested modestly in PE but carried out many PE activities. Increased resource allocations and CIDA support for PE since 2004 should permit the VCAs to launch and carry out more strategic PE programs.

Although most VCAs have allocated modest resources to public engagement in the past, they have carried out an impressive number of activities related to engaging Canadians in development as part of their program activities.

> Since 2004, reviewed VCAs proposed resource allocations for PE activities vary from 4% to 35% of their program budgets.[57]

Due to a lack of targeted funding, PE activities were often ad hoc and responsive, and, as a result, there was often limited follow-up – which clearly limited the value and benefit of the activities. Now, with funding allocated specifically to PE through VCA approved agreements with CIDA, and with VCAs' recent efforts to develop explicit PE strategies, VCAs will be able to maximize the benefits and value of public engagement investments.

All of the VCAs recognize the importance of RVs in fulfilling PE goals, but may need to learn to use them more strategically. VCAs noted that RVs often talk about their own experience with great passion, but the bigger issues or messages can be lost in the details. VCAs stated that they are trying to come to grips with how to build on the enthusiasm of RVs while at the same time keeping them "on message." It is interesting to note that a number of RVs interviewed for the PE study, stated that they would like clearer direction and guidance from the VCAs on the focus of PE activities – so VCAs may find a receptive audience when they communicate their "message" to RVs.

Other key areas in which VCAs plan to focus their PE efforts include South-North dialogue (including bringing Southern speakers to Canada), media campaigns, working in strategic partnerships and alliances, focusing on specific themes, using existing international efforts/campaigns (especially around the MDGs), and other highly effective ways of maximizing benefits and minimizing costs.

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[57] Based on the review of budgets for 5 out of 9 VCAs. Exact information for the period prior to 2004 was not available at the time of writing.

As explained in the next section, there is limited follow-up with Returned Volunteers by many of the VCAs. As a result, many RVs who might be interested in getting involved in public engagement activities do not do so. Based on meetings with the VCAs in October/November 2004, it is clear that VCAs are well aware of this limitation, and efforts are already underway to rectify this missed opportunity. For example, CUSO has developed a new alumni magazine to support its RVs to stay involved. As well, WUSC has updated its RV database in an effort to reconnect with former volunteers.

The sidebar suggests a number of ways in which VCAs could enhance their PE programs.

> **Ways to enhance PE programs**
>
> More coordinated efforts between VCAs on certain development issues or specific campaigns could be a more effective way of engaging the Canadian public.
>
> More coordinated efforts between VCAs and other NGOs at the local or regional level, using vehicles such as provincial councils, on certain development issues or specific campaigns could be a more effective way of engaging the Canadian public
>
> Sharing RVs would be one way of increasing the VCAs ability to get the message out. For example, if CUSO is working on a specific campaign and wants to get the information to rural Saskatchewan, they could ask an RV who went overseas with CWY to help reach the targeted audiences.

Finding 39: VCAs face a number of important trade-offs in designing their volunteer cooperation programs and deciding how best to invest the financial resources at their disposal.

As VCAs design their programs and manage their resources they are confronted with numerous decisions and face a number of important and significant trade-offs, as illustrated in the sidebar.

In some of the countries visited during the field study, there were clear differences in the amount of field infrastructure and programming funds at the disposal of the different VCAs. It was beyond the scope and capacity of this review to investigate such differences, but it is clear that the decisions VCAs make with regard to the trade-offs have a bearing on the resources available for programming in any one country.

> **Managing trade-offs in volunteer cooperation programs**
>
> Level of resources for Canadian vs. overseas infrastructure
>
> Number of DCOs and/or countries supported
>
> Balance of support for public engagement vs. overseas development
>
> Amount of support provided to RVs vs. ongoing programming
>
> Generalist vs. specialist programming
>
> Support to more established DCOs, often based in the capital or provincial towns vs. younger, emerging or more remote DCOs

The VCAs are also regularly faced with decisions about whether to support more mature DCOs or emerging DCOs. Mature organizations are usually easier to access, require less support, and are able to demonstrate faster results. Emerging organizations are often in remote areas that are more difficult and costly to access, require a greater level of interaction, and take longer to demonstrate results. This is a situation in which longer-term development effectiveness is often at odds with shorter-term cost effectiveness. In our interviews with VCA field representatives, they recognized the dilemma and acknowledged that with reductions in budget and the increased emphasis on results they often have to decide to work with the more mature DCO than with the more needy, emerging DCO. Although there is no simple resolution to this programming dilemma, it should be explicitly acknowledged by VCAs and addressed whenever programming strategies are being revisited or updated. VCAs might also want to review with their programming staff what other measures could be taken to ensure that short-term administrative considerations are not superseding more strategic and programmatic considerations.

5.2.2 Implementation

Finding 40: VCAs have generally been effective in implementing local capacity building programs. There is need for improvement in PE program management and returned volunteer follow up.

Local Capacity Building: Our review of the work of the three VCAs involved in DCO capacity building indicates that they are generally managing the programs well. Most importantly, it is broadly viewed that the VCAs are aligning human resources (volunteers and staff) with DCO needs (OD, technical, other). On the whole, DCOs speak highly of the openness of communication with the VCAs and the follow-up provided by the VCAs. DCOs indicate that the support provided by VCAs is responsive to their needs and changing contexts.

> **Distance Education Specialist**
>
> Extensive experience in developing distance education (a minimum of five years)
>
> Ability to develop a distance education methodology congruent with technological limitations
>
> Experience in training and mentoring
>
> Basic to intermediate ability in Spanish
>
> Excellent organization and planning skills
>
> Experience working cross-culturally
>
> Experience working in a rural context an asset
>
> Knowledge of Bolivia and/or Latin America an asset
>
> Willing and able to travel to rural areas.

Evidence of the changing requirements is found in reviewed job descriptions for volunteers. Given the increased levels of education in the developing countries, DCOs are increasingly demanding highly qualified individuals to support their capacity in specific technical/professional areas thus job descriptions are becoming more specialized (see sidebar). Based on our limited study, the VCAs are able to meet DCO demands. This is an area that CIDA and VCAs may wish to monitor and/or analyze more deeply in future reviews.

As noted in Section 4.2.2, the DCOs spoke highly of how the volunteers work with their organizations, and the attitude they bring to their work (see sidebar). Since volunteers come from a different context (cultural, social, etc.) and from a different work setting, they bring a different way of thinking and question things in a way that is refreshing, often helping the DCO to become clearer

> **DCO feedback on volunteer placements**
>
> Volunteers are very qualified and experienced.
>
> Volunteers come as equals, ready to work side-by-side with the other staff of the DCO. They expect no special privileges and have no special powers or control over resources.
>
> Volunteers' approach of living in similar conditions/sharing a similar lifestyle, working side-by-side, facing the problems and issues together, and solving them together, creates a sense of solidarity and shared struggle with the DCOs.
>
> The DCOs and their staff see this attitude and approach as critical to the value and the effectiveness of volunteers (which they would contrast with the usual attitude and approach of 'experts').

about its vision and program strategies, and in some instances even giving rise to new programs. Furthermore, most volunteers come to their placement with considerable experience and the DCO manager and senior staff often use them as sounding boards as they are working through problems or wondering about a particular course of action. The notable area for improvement relates to the need for capacity building tools and support (as discussed in the previous section).

Public engagement: Most of the VCAs reviewed as part of this study have faced significant management challenges with respect to the public engagement program, largely due to a lack of financial and human resources to manage the program. As noted in Sections 4.5.3 and 5.2.1, the result for all of the VCAs included in this study, except

> Oxfam-Québec has managed to consistently maintain a highly comprehensive program, conduct strong follow-up to activities, and maintain regular communications with its partner organizations. The key reasons for Oxfam-Québec's management successes appear to be related to the adherence to a strong and clear PE strategy, strong and formal partnerships with strategic organizations, and the reliance upon a strong volunteer base for coordinating and organizing activities. That said, it is evident that with greater financial and human resources allocated to PE programming, Oxfam-Québec will be able to maximize its PE activities.

Oxfam-Québec, has been that consistently, significant opportunities have been missed, approaches have been more ad hoc and responsive, rather than strategic, and there has been a lack of follow-up to activities, limiting the benefit of PE efforts. In particular, due to a lack of human resources to coordinate volunteers, these VCAs have often not been able to make full use of the many Canadian individuals and Returned Volunteers interested in volunteering and supporting the VCAs work in some way. VCAs have also not always adequately pursued opportunities to partner with other civil society organizations that could help them maximize efforts and inputs by joining forces. As noted in the section on planning, it is expected that VCAs' development of cohesive PE strategies and the allocation of specific funding to support these strategies will significantly alleviate these management challenges.

On a more positive note, several VCAs have achieved significant success through regional-level coordination. CUSO and CWY are significant examples of this management practice. Where strong regional coordination or offices exist, strategic partnerships have been developed, follow-up is evident, new communities of Canadians have been reached, and volunteers have been well utilized. Given earlier reported findings that results were strong for the Canadian public when engaged in their own communities and homes, the regional presence of VCAs seems even more relevant.

Support for volunteers: In terms of support to volunteers, interview data suggest moderate to high levels of satisfaction by volunteers with most aspects of VCA support. RVs who were interviewed and who responded to the survey were asked to talk about their experience with the organization in terms of pre-departure training, support while overseas, and the support they received once they returned. Overall, 78% say they were very satisfied with their entire experience as overseas volunteers, with another 19% saying they were somewhat satisfied.

> Volunteers found pre-departure preparation satisfactory, especially in terms of cross-cultural sensitivity. RVs also recognize that it would have been extremely difficult for VCAs to have completely prepared them for the experiences they had.
>
> "*When you are volunteering in a small community with no electricity and no phone lines etc, sometimes the best part of your experience will be the confusion and disorientation that is sure to occur. So while CWY did a good job of preparing us for overseas work, the best thing they told me was 'Be prepared for the unexpected.*"

In terms of training, only 36% of respondents indicated that their pre-departure training was extremely relevant to their actual experience. Instead, 51% indicated that the training was only somewhat relevant to their experience. Comments from respondents generally point out that the training around cross-cultural issues was very good, but that specific preparation for individual placements was lacking. It was also noted however, that being completely prepared would be next to impossible, given the ever-changing context of volunteering in developing countries. (In the age of Internet connectivity, some volunteers are able to stay connected to families and former work places while they are overseas, which gives them opportunities to seek suggestions, moral support, and additional information.)

Exhibit 5.1 suggests that RVs are generally satisfied with support received from VCAs while overseas and on return to Canada. However, there is some room for improvement in terms of support to volunteers upon their return to Canada; this is further supported by individual interviews. RVs expressed a certain level of dissatisfaction with the way in which their organizations stayed in touch. Many felt that the lack of effort made by the organizations was a missed opportunity for building a base of support. It was

recognized, however, that organizations might be unable to support returned volunteers in significant ways due to human and financial resource limitations.

Some of the RVs felt that follow-up would have been more relevant if it had happened about a month or two after their return. They felt that the debriefing they got was partly wasted as the volunteers were anxious to see their families or simply overwhelmed by their recent experience. Perhaps a short debriefing in the field before return, followed by a more intensive debriefing a month after return to Canada would be more useful to RVs.

Many of the RVs interviewed talked of a loss of momentum when they returned to their lives in Canada. Some said they wished they had known about opportunities to get involved while fresh from overseas. VCAs could send out emails to check in with and inform RVs of opportunities or places to look for opportunities to be involved in their communities.

Exhibit 5.1   RVs satisfaction with VCA Support (Overseas and on return to Canada)

	VERY SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED
Satisfaction with support while overseas	54%	33%	10%	3%
Satisfaction with support upon return to Canada	40%	39%	16%	5%

Finding 41: The practice of using multi-partner placements is employed by VCAs in a number of countries. Generally the advantages of such placements outweigh the disadvantages, but this is not always the case.

Traditionally most volunteer cooperation has involved the placement of a dedicated volunteer (and more recently interns) with a host DCO for a period of six months to two or more years.[58] More recently some VCAs have adopted a new mode of multi-partner placement in which one volunteer supports several DCOS (see section 4.2.1).

Some of the important advantages of multi-partner placements include:

- They allow the deployment of one or more volunteers to a number of needy DCOs; this is particularly important when specific skills and/or know-how are in demand are hard to find and when the intervention does not require the constant presence of the volunteer(s) at the DCO.

- They make it possible to assist smaller DCOs that are not always in a position to fully utilize or take on the responsibility of a full-time volunteer.

- They can contribute to building bridges and sharing between the various DCOs being assisted by the multi-partner volunteer.

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[58] CWY operates quite differently, involving a group of participants who are usually placed with a community (as opposed to a DCO) and for a shorter period of time, usually three months in each of Canada and the Southern country.

There are, however, disadvantages to such placements:

- When the volunteer does not reside directly with the DCO, the volunteer and the DCO will often not establish the same depth of understanding (of each other and the tasks at hand); the volunteer can easily be more disconnected and the DCO does not benefit from the same level of 'accompaniment' that is experienced with a single placement.

- Multi-partner placements can create coordination challenges in terms of sharing volunteer time between DCOs, especially if there are a number of different multi-partner volunteers involved with the same group of DCOs.

- Multi-partner placements can be an easy way to avoid difficult choices when resources are scarce. Although it might appear to be financially efficient to provide more limited assistance to a number of DCOs, this is true only if it could be shown to be developmentally effective as well; it does not always appear to be the case.

Aware of some of the disadvantages and potential pitfalls of this form of placement, it is incumbent on the VCAs to put in place evaluation processes or mechanisms to assess the impact of such placements and take measures to mitigate against some of the disadvantages.

Finding 42: VCAs' effectiveness in communicating the added value of VCP to GoC and Canadians is improving. However, ongoing misunderstanding of the Program's objectives, approaches and results underlines the critical need for additional attention to communications about VCP, inside and outside of CIDA.

As suggested earlier, VCA communication with CIDA CPB has improved dramatically in the past couple of years, to the credit of both CIDA and the VCAs. According to interviewed VCAs, the effectiveness of VCA communications with FAC is mixed – some report doing it well, others identify this as an area for improvement.

Our review suggests that there is some room for improvement in VCA communications to a broader GoC audience (beyond CPB) given the mixed understanding of the Program objectives, approaches and results identified earlier in this report.

> **Examples of ways to enhance Canadians' understanding about international volunteering**
>
> Regular sessions by VCAs with parliamentarians including Foreign Affairs Committees
>
> Brown bag lunches on international trends in volunteering in CIDA and FAC and/or for others (such as the one recently conducted by VSO Canada at CIDA in February 2005)
>
> Greater/improved/integrated use of VCA, CIDA and FAC internal communications newsletters and websites (e.g. Entre Nous in CIDA; similar to the YES website)
>
> Establishing Annual Awards for International Volunteering organizations and/or volunteers
>
> A book and/or a film on how Canadian 'international volunteering' is contributing to poverty alleviation
>
> VCAs and GoC establishing a joint database of returned international volunteers

5.2.3 Monitoring and Reporting

Finding 43: VCAs results tracking and reporting systems tend to meet CIDA's accountability requirements better than VCA needs for performance information. This is an area requiring additional review and analysis by CIDA and VCAs.

At the time of data collection, VCAs were in relatively early stages of implementation of the new VCP program and only six of the nine VCA programs had reached the 6-month period when their first narrative reports were due.[59] Of these six, only four had submitted their narrative reports to CIDA (thus our analysis is limited and further study by CIDA may be required). CIDA reports that most financial reports have been submitted on time.

In our review of the available reports, we found two reports that provided information that demonstrated the effects of VCA activities on the beneficiaries (organizations and communities). In most of the reports, we noted an excessive emphasis on activities (particularly management

> Two of the four reports focused on activity reporting: number of placements, number of PE activities organized. The activities were not linked to results, so it was difficult to assess the role of the activity in supporting results achievement
>
> Two of the reports attempted to report on results. However they tended to report on the results of activities/placements rather than the results established in the project LFAs.

and operational activities) and inputs (e.g. description of volunteer placements). This emphasis seems to reflect CIDA accountability and reporting requirements (discussed in section 5.3.4). The majority of reviewed reports do not report against planned results identified in approved planning sheets, but report instead on the results of individual placements. One of the four reports reviewed included the project LFA, but the report was not organized according to expected results, nor were performance indicators used to inform reporting on results.

Given that VCA reporting has been limited to date, CIDA should revisit reporting again in 2005 to ensure that reports meet the requirements for good reporting and provide information that will allow CIDA to report on its VCP results.

In addition, there are several related issues that deserve mention here:

VCA reporting systems and data: VCA reporting systems and reports seem to be designed to respond more to CIDA's RBM requirements, and possibly VCA administrative needs, than to VCA country program management needs and decision-making requirements. For example, VCAs that participated in the capacity building program review were not able to easily retrieve information on results of volunteer placements in DCOs from their databases for the purpose of this study. We also have some concerns about the robustness of existing data on assignments, results, changes produced. There are also issues with the current database systems in that some of the field offices cannot readily access information from them, or upload information to them. VCAs need to ensure that all field offices have the equipment and communications lines to readily access the database, or more realistically ensure that the system that is put in place is accessible by the weakest (poorest lines, oldest computer) node in the network.

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[59] This was linked to the staggered start-up dates of their contribution agreements with CIDA.

VCA program budgets generally set aside modest **resources for monitoring, evaluation and reporting**. Evaluation budgets are used primarily to hire consultants to conduct an evaluation, while monitoring budgets are used to fund VCA monitoring trips to the projects. In terms of M&E, there does not appear to be a standard formula for M&E budgeting that is used across the organizations. Each organization submits its own budget to CIDA, and some VCAs are more explicit in defining their M&E budgets than others. Among the four VCA budgets that were reviewed, two specifically identified a budget for evaluation and monitoring and outlined how the money would be spent (see sidebar). This represented 1% of their overall budget. Moreover, VCAs set aside limited resources (and in some

> **Program evaluation** – Consultant fees and travel as an independent evaluator of program activities to ensure the model remains proactive of the partners needs.
>
> **Program monitoring** – In Canada and overseas travel by program staff to monitor the development of the program.
>
> **Field Program monitoring** – In-field and regional travel for both Canadian field staff and Local Professionals.
>
> WUSC/CECI Budget Notes (Proposal to CIDA, 2004)

cases, no resources) to create performance measurement systems that can track program performance. The majority of the funds are used to pay for expenses associated with travel rather than setting up M&E systems.

Results-based Workplan The proposal is the basis for implementation and judgment of performance, and constitutes the overall plan to achieve the results (see sidebar). The instructions that the VCAs receive from CIDA in terms of the annual workplans are briefly outlined in the Contribution Agreement. Currently, the requirements tend to focus on activities, rather than results. CPB could be more specific in terms of outlining the requirements for a results-based workplan.
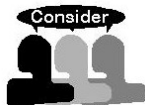
> **Revised workplan**
> The activities described in the Project Proposal constitute the workplan. However, as significant changes can occur during the implementation of the project, the organization shall submit to CIDA a revised annual workplan for each following year.
>
> CIDA Contribution Agreement with CWY, Part E, Page 16

Interviewed VCAs report that their **expertise in monitoring and evaluation** is modest, highlighting the need for further development in this area, particularly given the increasing emphasis on development outcomes as opposed to the inputs and outputs of volunteer cooperation. However, it is not clear if the VCAs have the resources to invest in same. (In recognition of these limitations, it is

> **Pilot M&E Initiative**
>
> CPB is presently supporting a pilot project to design an M&E system for one of the VCAs. The VCA has support from external consultants and the pilot system is to be finalized by the end of March 2005. The intent is that the pilot will be tested and applied and, if deemed appropriate, may be used by other VCAs

positive and noteworthy that CIDA has offered some support to one VCAs for a pilot initiative (see sidebar).

Clearly, some additional review is required by CIDA and the VCAs to complete this analysis, and to identify if and how VCA reporting systems can be improved to meet their own organizations' needs for performance information as well as satisfy CIDA information requirements. This could be linked to the already planned follow-up by CIDA and VCAs related to the above-mentioned pilot initiative.

> In capacity development programs, there is a need to pay greater attention to the development of approaches, skills and tools to monitor and assess the capacity development impacts volunteer cooperation interventions are having on DCOs. This information should be more systematically gathered, analyzed and reported on. Reporting on positive impacts helps underline the value and contribution of VCP. Information on negative or limited impacts can point to appropriate corrective action.

5.3   CIDA Management

5.3.1   Planning and Design

Finding 44: CPB's creation of a programming approach to VCP management is an important step toward increasing the coherence of the Branch's investments in volunteer cooperation. Some further refinements by CIDA and CPB are needed to complete the program transformation process.

CPB's decision to launch a program approach to volunteer cooperation in 2003/04 was a positive step for several reasons:

It re-affirmed CIDA's interest in and commitment to volunteer cooperation as a form of development cooperation.

It provided CIDA with the opportunity to review, clarify and fine-tune its rationale for and design of its investment in volunteer cooperation.

It provided CIDA with an important and needed opportunity to define expected results **across** its investments in volunteer cooperation, rather than merely the expected results of investments in individual VCA programs, and thus supported a more coordinated and systematic approach.

Moreover, a review of the Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) and Risk-Based Accountability Framework (RBAF) suggests that they meet most of TBS requirements, which is particularly

> CIDA's ongoing monitoring and performance measurement...will be supplemented by…a program review, to take place in 2004-2005, to assess the pertinence and effectiveness of volunteer sending (sic) as one of CIDA's delivery channels. …..the review will suggest mid-course adjustments in light of lessons learned as well as confirm or correct appropriate funding allocations.
>
> RMAF Contributions through CIDA's CPB to the VCP
> (CIDA, 2004) p.8

> For many years, both CIDA and its Voluntary Sector partners operated with varying emphasis on specific objectives. There was no basis for consistency or prioritization; and there was little measurement and precise reporting of what results could be achieved.
>
> RMAF Contributions through CIDA's CPB to the VCP
> (CIDA, 2004) p.2

> **Strengths of the VCP RMAF and RBAF**[60]
>
> Contains major elements required in the RMAF such as context, reflection of results to date, reflection of evaluation/review to date, logic framework, PMF, evaluation strategy
>
> **Areas for Improvement**
>
> Cost for Performance Monitoring not assigned
>
> Program reporting identified but unclear responsibility, purpose of reports

impressive given that these were the first such frameworks developed within CPB. Moreover, we are told that the frameworks were well received by CIDA and by TBS, and that the logic model in the VCP RMAF has been used to inform the development of a logic framework for the Branch.

Without taking away from these significant accomplishments, there are a few matters that should be addressed by CPB and CIDA to increase the overall coherence and potential effectiveness of CIDA investments in volunteer cooperation.

[60] Based on RMAF Review Template, Treasury Board Secretariat.

Recognize, acknowledge and resource the transformation of VCP management practices underway
VCP has been operational as a program for less than one year, during which time considerable time and energy was invested by CIDA in important and necessary program start-up activities such as finalizing program agreements with the ten VCAs and launching this program review. The VCAs have been similarly occupied in starting up new programs and/or updating existing ones. Thus CIDA, CPB and the VCAs are at relatively early stages of a new type of relationship and are actively exploring how to do this effectively.

Whereas CIDA has been administering individual contribution agreements with VCAs for the past few decades, CPB is now also assuming a more strategic role in managing the VCP portfolio. This is a major transformation that needs to be explicitly recognized, acknowledged and resourced as it suggests the need for a new modus operandi in CPB, which will have several implications for CIDA management practices:

- It underlines a need to invest in the development of strategic management skills and capacities among those responsible for managing the program portfolio, to ensure that sufficient ongoing attention is paid to analyzing the changing context, identifying the implications for the program, adapting the program (vision, purpose, expected results) as required and keeping the program relevant.

- It suggests the need to develop approaches to manage the portfolio of program investments, rather than limit itself to the administration of contribution agreements. This implies keeping a closer eye on the "return" of such investments (i.e. results, impacts and value-added), given "portfolio" objectives. It suggests the need for some flexible program resources to be set-aside specifically (by CIDA and VCAs both) for the purposes of rewarding excellence in programming and/or program innovation (including testing of new ideas and/or new developmental partners). It also implies having the authority and responsibility to recommend and make necessary adjustments to the portfolio over time as required.

- It reinforces the importance of systems aimed at tracking and reporting the results at the level of individual VCAs, as well as at the level of the overall program. This has implications for the level and type of resources invested in the development and maintenance of such systems. It also requires CIDA to be clear about what information is essential, and how such information will be used, by whom, and for what purposes. It also has implications for resource allocations for monitoring and evaluation, which are limited and therefore also need to be managed strategically so as to inform decision- making.

Agency statement regarding volunteer cooperation As suggested earlier, a clear statement by CIDA regarding volunteer cooperation would resolve many problems:

- First, it would clear up any lingering doubts about the purpose of such investments.

- It would allow the Agency to rationalize how its volunteer cooperation investments (VCP, Canada Corps, Youth Internship Programs) complement one another and/or other GoC investments (such as NetCorps).

- It could help solve the ongoing debate about the value of investing in developmental outcomes and/or public engagement. It would also provide CIDA (and possibly other GoC departments) with the opportunity to provide some conceptual clarity regarding the different kinds of outcomes it can support (e.g. developing country and/or Canadian capacities), and the level for such support (e.g. individual, organizational, institutional and/or societal) for VCP and perhaps other similar programs.
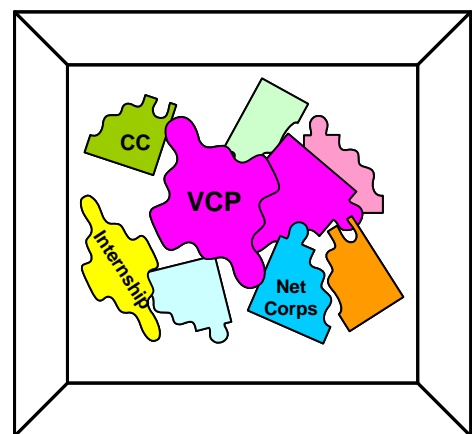
Program eligibility criteria The Agency statement should also help to clarify/define which organizations are eligible (or not eligible) for VCP, Canada Corps or other similar programs. In terms of VCP support, for example, should it be limited to organizations that have volunteer sending as their primary mechanism? How should CIDA respond to other organizations that share this primary mechanism, such as Engineers Without Borders?

> Currently ten VCAs with different foci, priorities and strategies are housed together in VCP. Some have defined a niche in the VCP portfolio, and others are in the process of defining a niche.
>
> A clear CIDA/GoC statement could provide a clear rationale for the current (or some other) mix. It could also help clarify the rationale and inform the criteria for future GoC resource allocations among those organizations in the VCP portfolio.

Expected VCP program level results VCP's current logic model houses several target groups (including VCAs, VCA partners, Canadian volunteers, CIDA, Canadians and developing countries). It also houses various types of results for each group – short and long term; developmental, enabling and management results. This is a large number of stakeholders and results to accommodate in one logic model. As a consequence, there is some ambiguity about the primary and secondary target groups and results (see sidebar), and these ambiguities are also reflected in the Performance Measurement Framework.

> **Ambiguities in the result statements**
>
> Two or more targets in one result (i.e. VCAs and partners, CIDA and Canadian public)
>
> Two or more changes in one result statement: Increased consistency of CIDA and VCA programming and increased compliance with Voluntary Sector Initiative norms
>
> Two different activities in one statement: e.g. effective VCA reporting and completion of program review
>
> Unclear results statements: e.g. increased support of Canadians for international cooperation

In our view, one reason for this ambiguity is that the logic model and PMF are trying to accommodate all the different VCA programs currently housed within VCP in the absence of a clearly articulated vision for CIDA investments in volunteer cooperation. A second, related reason is that the results as currently defined read more like a summary of the results of individual VCA programs, as opposed to results that cut across these initiatives.

In conclusion, we would suggest that CIDA revisit/revise the VCP logic and PMF.

> **Ambiguities in the result logic**
>
> - It is unclear how lower level results support achievement of higher-level results, e.g. there are missing links between PE activities and the long-term outcome focused on increased support for international cooperation.
>
> **Ambiguities in the result-indicator relationship**
>
> - The indicators selected for some results do not measure the change as stated, i.e. increased number of effective volunteers measured by degree of satisfaction of the partners.
>
> - Lack of clarity of some of the indicators: e.g. increased value for money

This seems particularly important for several reasons. First, as the program is less than one year old, stakeholders have the unusual opportunity to introduce program changes and see the benefits of program changes made in early stages. Second, such changes can provide the basis for a more meaningful review of the program, as opposed to individual VCP investments in Year 3 as planned.

Third, it could potentially inform broader discussions about Agency, GoC and/or VCA joint investments in volunteer cooperation (VCP and other). This was evident in a recent CIDA meeting with VCAs related to public engagement (see sidebar).

> In terms of PE, CIDA would like to engage in a veritable partnership with VCAs (rather than just be the" funder"). Based on our strengths, our areas of complementarity, and a common vision, what are our respective niches and what kind of initiatives should we pursue together?
>
> CIDA Summary of the discussion related to public engagement between CIDA and the VCAs January 26, 2005.

Another way of clarifying and sharpening the focus of the VCP would be to revisit the purposes of the agencies that are included in the VCP. The aim of all but two[61] of the VCAs is to achieve developmental results in the South, and in particular capacity development results with DCOs. For example, the primary purpose of CWY – to provide youth with an international educational experience in a cross-cultural setting – is quite different. Administratively, this difference is acknowledged and reflected in the fact that CWY is managed by the Youth Division (as is the Youth Internship Program), whereas the other VCAs are managed by the Volunteer Cooperation and Public Engagement Division. The VCP portfolio would be more coherent if CWY was not included. Moreover, the VCP purpose and the PMF would be more focused if the program did not include CWY.

5.3.2 Implementation

Finding 45: CIDA has undertaken several important measures to develop more coordinated, systematic and transparent approaches to VCP management, which are positive and should be continued.

CIDA's Management Approach

As a consequence of the internal audit of CPB in 2003, the Branch initiated several important changes in Branch operations that reinforced the culture of results orientation and due diligence that was already emerging between CIDA and the VCAs for VCP. The sidebar illustrates various positive examples of CIDA's increased emphasis on a coordinated and systematic approach

> **Examples of CIDA's systematic and coordinated approach to VCP management**
>
> All VCAs have similar types of contribution agreements with CIDA
>
> There are similar expectations for all VCAs in terms of how they are expected to plan and report on their programs.
>
> All VCA agreements are reviewed by the same person (the Director and Director General) and signed by the same person (the VP)
>
> Various program "entitlements" that previously were negotiated individually by VCAs with their CIDA officer (e.g. utilization of South-South volunteers) are becoming more available to all.
>
> CIDA's legal department reviewed all VCA agreements before signature.

for VCP. Moreover, regular formal meetings between CIDA and the VCA Executive Directors (approximately quarterly in the past year) seem to provide an effective forum for exchange and collaboration.

In our view one area for improvement relates to how the roles, responsibilities and practices of VCP officers are formalized. Currently, as in the rest of the Agency, job descriptions relate to a position level (e.g. PM5) rather than to the specific responsibilities of an officer. Thus officers responsible for VCP do not have a specific outline of their responsibilities as they relate to VCP. Various efforts have been made to introduce new and standardized approaches used by officers to oversee CIDA investments in VCAs. However, change takes time; variances still exist, evidenced by a mix of old and new ways of relating to VCAs (e.g. decisions about CIDA support for South-South volunteers varied by officer in the first year of the program, but this has been recently changed). Moreover, VCP officers report that they have been

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[61] CWY and AFS IC are the notable exceptions.

consumed by resolving and addressing necessary and important but largely administrative matters related to the creation of VCP over the past couple of years. They are looking forward to greater involvement in more substantive and/or strategic matters in the future, something which has been perceived as a luxury to date.

In order to support a systematic approach to VCA management, it would be helpful if CIDA clarified officers' specific responsibilities vis-à-vis VCP so that all officers (new and old) have a common understanding of expectations. This might be accomplished through the annual workplanning exercise.

Funding Approach

As noted in Chapter 2, CPB support for volunteer cooperation has fallen from a peak of approximately $57 million per year in the early 1990s to approximately $42 million in 2004, and is projected to remain at this level for the following four years. When inflation is taken into account, this represents a major cut in support for this type of programming.

In anticipation of the expected approval of a volunteer cooperation program in 2004, CIDA initiated several processes aimed at reviewing the VCAs' past performance as well as their program proposals for 2004-09. The results of these reviews were intended to inform VCP resource allocations among VCAs. Between 2001 and 2004, the review process encompassed such activities as:

- Organizational assessments of all VCAs

- Financial audits of VCAs – all outstanding audits recommendations were resolved

- Detailed reviews of VCAs' program proposals

After these reviews were completed, individual VCA annual budgets were determined. This included reviews of i) historical levels of support by CIDA to the VCA (the so-called base amount) and ii) the amount requested by the VCA in its proposal to CIDA. Base amounts were adjusted upwards or downwards according to CIDA satisfaction with the results of the reviews described above to determine the budget allocations for VCAs. At the end of the process, five agencies had their budgets increased over the base amounts, and three had their budgets reduced. VCA budgets are now set for the next four years.

> **Areas for review of VCAs and VCA proposals**
>
> Satisfactory results of CIDA financial audits of VCAs
>
> Satisfactory findings about the capability and absorptive capacity of VCAs, based on CIDA-commissioned organizational monitoring/assessments of VCAs
>
> CIDA satisfaction with the timeliness and quality of VCA reports to CIDA
>
> Evidence that VCAs could honor cost-sharing amounts (only up to 67% of programming costs are covered by CIDA)
>
> Evidence that VCA program proposals for 2004-09:
>
> - supported CIDA priorities and were aligned with SAE and the KARs
>
> - reduced the number of countries worked in and programming in CIDA focus countries
>
> - had public engagement programs in place

TBS' approval of VCP in 2004/05 provided funding for ten VCAs over the five-year period. While the overall increase in CPB support for volunteer cooperation was modest, the five-year commitment provides individual VCAs with some security that will enable them to program with some confidence into the future. On the other hand, all available VCP resources are now committed for the next five years. This has several implications:

- It effectively limits or prevents new entrants to the Program, unless one or more of the existing VCAs have their budgets reduced by CPB thus freeing up funds.

- It prevents the emergence or growth of innovative programs of VCAs that are currently receiving CPB support, unless one or more of the existing VCAs have their budgets reduced by CPB thus freeing up funds.

In our view, the current allocation system has some shortcomings that should be addressed. The importance given to the base amount tends to favor those VCAs that are already receiving CPB support, while placing others at a disadvantage. Given that VCP has an expected duration of five years, this is a significant barrier to entry for new comers or VCAs that make significant positive, valued changes, improvements or innovations in their programs. In the future, it could be helpful if VCP set aside a specific amount (e.g. 5% of the overall program budget) to reward excellence and/or innovation in volunteer cooperation programming, based on pre-established, transparent criteria and processes. This would give CPB program managers a way to reinforce innovation and motivate good performers.
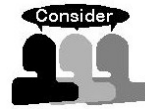
Another longer term strategy for CIDA's consideration is to couple future funding levels with the actual results of VCA programs (be they developmental and/or public engagement) and de-link them from historical funding levels. This would be particularly important in the context of fixed or shrinking budgets, since continued emphasis on historical funding levels benefits established programs and makes entry by newcomers difficult. This would also provide other ways for CIDA to reward creativity and innovation in VCA programming. Such an approach represents a significant change from the status quo, and would require careful consideration by CIDA.
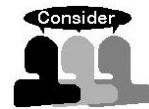
Finally, CPB should develop longer planning horizons for new programs (say two to three years, rather than one year or less) to accommodate the VCA program cycles, which typically involves multi-year commitments to partners overseas. If CIDA/CPB wants to look at changing re-allocation processes, it will have to do so with an eye to the long term (five to ten years) and have clear programmatic rationale for such re-allocation.

5.3.3 Monitoring and Reporting

Finding 46: Currently the VCP program places considerable emphasis on CIDA accountability requirements at the project level and insufficient attention to project and program performance.

Our reviews of VCP project and program reporting requirements was based on requirements as specified in the RBAF and individual VCA contribution agreements, supplemented with interview information.

Project level requirements: As shown in the sidebar, VCAs receiving VCP support are required to submit at least twelve (12) different reports every year to CIDA. A quick review of the titles of these reports suggests that the majority (9) focus on resource utilization and/or activity reporting.

A review of VCP narrative reporting requirements[62] (see Exhibit 5.2) suggests several shortcomings. The existing requirements:

> **VCP Project Level Reporting Requirements**
>
> Program Activity Report System (PARS) - Quarterly
>
> Interim Financial Report - Quarterly
>
> Interim Narrative Report - Semi-Annually
>
> Annual Financial and Narrative Report - Annually
>
> Technical Cooperation Reporting - Annually
>
> Final Narrative and Financial Report - Once at the end of the program cycle
>
> Special Reports - Upon request
>
> Environmental Assessment Report - Upon request

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[62] These are defined in the CPB Contribution Agreement-Corporate Template (May 2004)

- Emphasize performance for the period in question; there is no requirement to report on cumulative performance of VCA programs over time.

- Do not specifically require an analysis of the context and its implications for the VCA program, an oversight given the rapidly evolving context in which most programs operate.

- Emphasize (through the sheer number of associated reporting requirements) volunteer placements over capacity development results, despite the stated program's emphasis on organizational capacity development.

- Emphasize CIDA policies and priorities over those that the VCAs have outlined in their proposals and annual workplans, making the approved project program frameworks somewhat irrelevant.

- Make excessive reporting demands on the VCAs, which are supposed to be long established and well-known partners of CIDA. This is reflected in terms of the overall number of reports as well as the frequency of activity-and resource utilization related reports required by CIDA.

Exhibit 5.2   Analysis of Selected VCP Narrative Reporting Requirements[63]

REPORT	VCP REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	COMMENTS
Program Activity Report System (PARS)	VCAs are required to report on Program activities on line into CIDA's PARS on a quarterly basis	Focuses on activities in the period, not cumulative program performance
Interim Narrative report	Based on the annual workplan, includes a summary of activities and progress towards results in the reporting period List volunteer placements (according to 6 categories)	Focuses on activities in the period, not cumulative program performance While program is packaged as capacity building programs, the continued requirement to report in detail on volunteer placements reinforces the emphasis on placements, rather than on DCOs, or even countries in which DCOs are strengthened. Semi-annual reporting appears excessive, annual cumulative reporting could suffice
Annual Narrative Report	**Project/Program Performance Report (PPR)** provides CIDA with information on the results which were achieved over the course of the previous year…Using CIDA's format for PPRs, the report should focus on KARS and SAE principles. A summary of country, priority, sector and thematic coding should be provided. PE activities are to be reported separately **Revised Workplan** which updates the activities described in the Program proposal to reflect significant changes that occur during the implementation of the Program **Updated List of Placements** which lists a consolidation of placements made during the year	The PPRs reporting format that CIDA asks the partners to fill out in their annual narrative reports responds to CIDA requirements, and does not allow the VCAs to present a full picture of their programs. For instance, the PPR format does not have a context section or management sections that would capture external and internal contextual issues Even though it is positive for VCAs to focus on CIDA KARs and MDGs, the organization of reports according to those higher level results may not be appropriate. Rather than focusing on the planned project results, VCAs are reporting on the extent to which they are achieving the KARs. The project program framework becomes then irrelevant and may not be used to implement and judge the program performance. The contribution agreement does not specify what comprises a good workplan.
Final Narrative Report	VCAs are required to summarize results at the outcome/impact level, including lessons learned, as well as PPR for last year of program, list of updated	

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[63] As stated in Contribution Agreement Template, May 2003

REPORT	VCP REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	COMMENTS
	placements, PARS reporting requirements	
	VCAs are expected to explain how it has met its cost-sharing obligations and provide an updated declaration on all sources of funding for the project	
Technical Cooperation Reporting - Annually	VCAs have to submit completed CIDA forms on technical cooperation activities and personnel	

In our view, CIDA needs to review and streamline VCA reporting requirements, and focus more on outcomes than inputs and outputs. The TBS guidelines for reporting are useful for CIDA to take into account when reviewing and revising VCA reporting requirements, as are CPB's own reporting guidelines (see sidebar). The reporting guidelines were developed five years ago. Given that results-based management approaches are evolving, CPB may wish to examine the Guidelines to ensure their continued appropriateness.

Program level requirements: For the first time in CIDA's history of support for VCAs, CIDA has committed to reporting on program level performance. In the first year of the program, VCP managers focused on making the new program operational; limited attention was paid to program level monitoring and reporting. However, as the program is now completing its first year, this is an opportune time for CIDA to review the adequacy and clarity of such requirements.

> **TBS Reporting Guidelines [64]**
>
> Clear description of environment and strategies employed
>
> Meaningful performance expectations identified
>
> Performance accomplishments reported against expectations
>
> Valid and reliable performance information presented
>
> Demonstrated capacity to learn and adapt
>
> **CPB Reporting Guidelines [65]**
>
> Semi-annual or annual report should provide the reader with current information reflecting performance to date, that is cumulative progress toward the achievement of expected results
>
> The report should discuss variance, identified risks, and assumptions, lessons learned and recommendations

Our review of VCP program monitoring and reporting requirements and responsibilities (see Exhibit 5.3) suggests that there is room for increased clarification in several areas.

- As previously suggested, VCP Program level indicators need to be reviewed and clarified (see previous analysis in section 5.3.2 above) so that there is a meaningful basis for reviewing the Programs' performance in the years ahead.

- VCP Program level planning, monitoring and reporting requirements, strategies and responsibilities need to be more clearly defined and resourced beyond what is stated in the RBAF. For example, specific responsibilities related to on-going analysis of the context and strategic reflection/thinking around program strategy should be clarified, as well as processes to include VCAs into such processes. Similarly, further clarification is required on responsibilities related to

> For example, this review has demonstrated how important the changing context is to VCA programs, not to mention the type of support provided by the country programs of other donors. To date, CIDA has relied on the VCAs to share such information. Should CIDA itself have responsibility to monitor and assess the implications of the changing context? And if so, how?

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[64] From VCP Reporting Strategy as per RBAF, 2004, p. 18

[65] CPB Guide to Performance Reporting for Canadian and Development Country Partners (CIDA, 2000).

how CIDA will track and monitor overall program performance, who is charged with this responsibility, and what resources are dedicated to this.

- The RBAF makes reference to ongoing organizational monitoring of the VCAs. There is no specific mention of the need to conduct periodic organizational assessments of VCAs. We assume this is an oversight, and part of CIDA's ongoing monitoring processes.

- We laud the attention being paid by CPB to enhancing CPB officers' administrative skills and procedures, especially financial monitoring. It could also be beneficial to enhance officers' skills in other areas including how to monitor program and organizational performance, in Canada and in the field.

In conclusion, once program level results are clarified, CIDA needs to fine-tune and clarify program-level monitoring, reporting and evaluation strategies and investments.

Exhibit 5.3   Summary of Program Level Reporting Requirements

REPORT TITLE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Program Management Reports	VCP Program Management	Periodic
VCP Initiation reports	VCP Program management	Periodic
Field monitoring reports	VCP Program management	As completed
Financial Risk Assessments	Finance and VCP Program management	Annual
Internal Audit Report	PKMB and VCP Program management	As required
Recipient Audit reports	PKMB and VCP Program management	As required
Evaluation reports	PKMB and VCP Program management	2004/05, 2006/07 and 2009/10
DPR	PKMB and VCP Program management	Annual
VCA Organizational Monitoring	VCP Program management	Ongoing

6. Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

6.1 Major Conclusions

Changing International Context

The context within which Canada's support to international development cooperation takes place has changed significantly in the last 10 to 15 years. As the world is changing and global relationships are shifting and maturing, the relevance and role of volunteer cooperation is increasing significantly. As ideas about the purpose of international cooperation evolve and re-focus, so have expectations regarding the results of volunteer cooperation and how they should be achieved.

The advent of globalization, an increasingly inter-connected world, the reality of fiscal deficits as well as the mixed record of 50 years of international development assistance have resulted in the adoption of a set of principles for development effectiveness (*Shaping the 21st Century*, OECD, 1996) and a new 'road map' for development cooperation (Millennium Development Goals, UN, 2000). In most developing countries, the global agenda among donors is being translated into national poverty reduction strategies which, when paired with policies of decentralization, are increasing the role of civil societies in the South to mobilize around the delivery of such strategies as well as to ensure public accountability and good governance. This coincides with an increased worldwide interest in international development issues and international volunteerism in the wake of globalization and such international events as the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the USA and the recent Asian tsunami.

Together these changes have had significant impacts on the supply and demand for international volunteers, the modes and management of volunteer sending and cooperation, the level and type of government support for volunteer sending and cooperation, and the programming approaches used by Volunteer Cooperation Agencies around the world and in Canada.

Increasing Canadian Support for Volunteer Cooperation

The Government of Canada currently supports international volunteer cooperation through three major programs (the Volunteer Cooperation Program, International Youth Internships, and the Canada Corps Initiative) that use a variety of mechanisms to achieve results in developing countries and in Canada. In addition, the Voluntary Sector Programs Division of CPB funds other volunteer-sending organizations (Aga Khan Foundation of Canada). To our knowledge, however, the government does not have a policy that states Canada's goals and rationale for volunteer cooperation and that clarifies how each program contributes to the achievement of the goal.

Canada is in the midst of a foreign policy review and it appears that there will be an increased emphasis and support for the active involvement by Canadians in international cooperation, both internationally and in Canada. In the last few years, CIDA has been reviewing the role, rationale, and added-value of the Canadian voluntary sector and private sector partners in Canada's ODA program to improve collaboration. CPB has indicated that it is moving towards programming approaches that will foster local ownership as well as engagement of Canadian civil society in development. These will be reflected in the Agency's 2010 Vision statement.

CPB's programming budget has declined over the past ten years, both in nominal terms, and in terms of its relative proportion of the overall CIDA budget. Support to international volunteer cooperation was also cut back significantly during this period, as was support for Canadian public engagement. However, the recent creation of a corporate Volunteer Cooperation Program, the inclusion of a Canadian public engagement component to this program, an increase in the relative share of CPB's budget to VCP from 14% to 16%, and the creation of Canada Corps mark a renewed commitment by CIDA to international volunteer cooperation.

Volunteer Cooperation Results in Developing Countries and Canada

CIDA support for the VCP is contributing to significant development results in both developing countries and Canada. In developing countries, DCOs were overwhelmingly positive in their assessment of the impact that volunteers and the VCAs have had on their organizations' motivation, capacities and performance. They report significant positive changes to their organizational culture, systems, processes, programs, visibility and reputations and also report positive impacts on their clientele. However, the capacity development approaches and strategies employed by the different VCAs, and the level of resources, tools and skills are mixed, evolving and require the continued attention of most VCAs.

In Canada, the VCP has had profound impacts on volunteers themselves – on their values and beliefs, as global citizens, their skill levels, the career and education decisions they have made on their return, and their involvement and support to local community or international development. Although still in its early days, the VCP support to public engagement work is having positive effects on Canadians' understanding of, and openness to, different cultures as well as their knowledge of development issues, leading to increased involvement in international development and support to the development programs of VCAs. However, the public engagement approaches and strategies employed by the different VCAs, and the level of resources, tools and skills are mixed, evolving and require the continued attention of most VCAs. Moreover, some significant opportunities to achieve results with the Canadian public and to harness returned volunteers to this effect have been missed. CIDA's renewed support to VCA public engagement activities provides the basis to tap into some of this potential.

Ongoing Relevance of Volunteer Cooperation

The importance of international volunteer cooperation rests in part on the recognition that volunteers are able and effective agents for the strengthening of civil societies in the South. Volunteer cooperation is also viewed in many Northern countries as an effective way of engaging individual citizens as well as organizations and society at large in international development.

There is every indication that VCA programs are closely aligned with CIDA development priorities. The review clearly demonstrates the value of international volunteer cooperation in terms of its developmental impact, especially in its contribution to strengthening of civil societies in the South as attested not only by DCOs but by government representatives. Furthermore, Canadian volunteers represent the human face of Canada's ODA. They are 'grassroots ambassadors' for Canada, and in their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, gender and age group mix they are a true reflection of the new multicultural society that Canada has become. There is every indication that Canadian volunteers and Canadian international volunteer cooperation are highly valued, but in typically Canadian fashion too often seem to go un-acknowledged and un-celebrated.

Maturing Management and Relationships

There have been significant improvements in how CIDA's volunteer cooperation investments are being managed, both by CPB and by the VCAs. There have also been some significant shifts in the management, governance and strategic directions of VCAs in the last five to ten years, which is bringing new energy, experience and ways of working in the sector, as well as increasing the respect for VCAs. There have also been positive changes in relationships among the VCAs, and between the VCAs and CPB. Overall, new and stronger, mutually supportive relationships and partnerships are emerging.

Managing VCP Strategically

CPB's decision to create VCP was a positive step for various strategic, management and administrative reasons. First, the creation of such a program signals CPB's (and thus CIDA's) interest and support for volunteer cooperation. From a strategic point of view, it provides the Agency with an important opportunity to clarify and define how this investment in volunteer cooperation complements Canada's other important international volunteering programs, International Youth Internships and the Canada Corps Initiative. It also creates some management and administrative efficiencies for both CIDA and the VCAs through the establishment and utilization of common criteria, procedures, and requirements.

VCP has been operational as a program for less than one year, during which period considerable time and energy was invested by CIDA in important and necessary program start-up activities such as finalizing program agreements with the ten VCAs and launching this program review. The VCAs have been similarly occupied in starting up new programs and/or updating existing ones. Thus, CIDA/CPB and the VCAs are at relatively early stages of a new type of relationship and actively exploring how to do this effectively. Over the past few decades, CIDA has administered individual contribution agreements with VCAs. CPB is now in the early stages of assuming a new, additional role of managing the VCP program portfolio strategically. This is a major transformation that needs to be explicitly recognized, acknowledged and resourced as it suggests the need for new modus operandi in CPB with several implications for CIDA management practices and for VCAs.

Power of Volunteering

The very nature of volunteering – giving up position, salary and comfortable lifestyle, leaving home and loved ones, and doing so with humility and respect, motivated primarily by a desire to help and not harm – makes volunteering powerful and has an important bearing on the level of impact that volunteers have. One of the reasons international volunteering is effective in bringing about change is the fact that volunteers come from a different background (social, cultural, economic, work experience, etc.) than their developing country counterparts. They see things differently, do things differently, ask different questions. When this is done with sensitivity and respect, it has an incredible potential to stimulate reflection, generate new energy, and bring about change. The volunteer does not have to be from Canada or another Northern country; a volunteer from a different country in the South (as well as South-North volunteer placements) generates the same stimulating effect.

International volunteering is a powerful mechanism in development co-operation for several reasons. It forges bonds between and among Canadians (be they individual volunteers, civil society organizations, NGOs or representatives of the Canadian government) and their counterparts in the South, creating the basis for meaningful co-operation, action and results around common goals, be it at community, organizational or societal levels. It fosters the development of social networks for change (or social capital), both in Canada and around the world, mobilizing support for and action in regards to, common global concerns, such as HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation or debt relief. This is an area of tremendous potential, providing possibilities of global collaboration among a wide variety of organizations and networks involved in these and other areas such as education, aboriginal rights, municipal development and so on.

International volunteering also actively engages Canadians in international development through overseas placements, education and/or advocacy campaigns and thus builds Canada's capacity and expertise in international development, at individual, organizational and national levels. It supports Canadian values related to tolerance and trust and help to deepen Canadians' understanding of others in our multi-cultural society. It also helps to build a supportive constituency for Canada's aid program and Canada's role in the world. Finally, it provides a human face for Canada's ODA program in both Canada and in the South.

6.2   Recommendations

Our main recommendations to CIDA and the VCAs follow.

Recommendations to CIDA

1. CIDA should develop a Statement on International Volunteering that clearly defines the purpose and expected results of CIDA's overall investments in international volunteer cooperation.

The Statement should clarify how different CIDA investments in volunteer cooperation complement one another and other government investments. Moreover, in keeping with the whole of government approach, CIDA could also engage other government departments in this initiative. This Statement should be displayed prominently in CIDA internal and external communications, including the CIDA web site.

2. CIDA (Canadian Partnership Branch) should develop strategic programmatic approaches that it will use to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate the Volunteer Cooperation Program in its dynamic context.

Needs assessment: Since the CPB is in the early stages of managing the recently established Volunteer Cooperation Program portfolio, this is an opportune time to reflect on its satisfaction with past management practices that tended to focus on the administration of VCA agreements, and its need for new practices and/or resources (human, financial, other) to support more strategic, focused programming approaches. In this vein, those managing the VCP could meet with the representatives of other CIDA programs that have recently undertaken similar transformation processes (such as CIDA's Pan African Program) to benefit from their lessons learned.

Monitoring the context: Given the rapidly evolving contexts within which the VCP operates, it will be vital that managers employ such approaches to monitor the changing context, assess the implications for the program, and adapt the program (vision, purpose, expected results, strategies) as required to keep the program relevant.

Longer-term planning horizons: the Canadian Partnership Branch should also consider developing longer planning horizons for new programs (say three years or more, rather than one year or less) to accommodate the VCAs' program cycles, which typically involve multi-year commitments to partners overseas. This would give CIDA, VCAs and their partners overseas time to plan for and adjust to significant changes such as major changes in financial resources.

Portfolio management: Moreover, CIDA (CPB) should consider adopting some "portfolio management" approaches that complement existing administrative practices, keeping a closer eye on the return on such investments (i.e. results, impacts and value-added), given program portfolio objectives, and making necessary adjustments to the VCP program portfolio over time as required to increase its relevance and/or returns as required. The CPB should also consider allocating some flexible program resources within the VCP specifically for the purpose of rewarding performance and innovation of programming by existing and/or new VCAs.

3. CIDA (CPB) should review and sharpen the existing program's logic and performance measurement frameworks in order to clarify, focus and distinguish cross-cutting volunteer cooperation program synergies from the sum of VCA results. As part of this review it should consider removing organizations from the VCP portfolio whose program purposes are not congruent with VCP's primary purposes. It should also clarify and streamline reporting requirements at program and sub-program levels.

This type of analysis can be then used to inform and clarify CIDA information needs at the program level, as well as CIDA officers' responsibilities, and systems for collecting and utilizing this information. It will also help CIDA to clarify its information needs at the sub-program investment level (e.g. VCA) in order to streamline VCA reporting requirements and increase the emphasis on cumulative results over time.

As part of this review CIDA should consider removing Canada World Youth and AFS IC from the list of VCAs currently included under the VCP since their program purposes do not include achievement of developmental results in the South, one of VCP's primary purposes.

CIDA should continue to provide financial and moral support to VCAs in developing and maintaining results-tracking systems. The first important step will be for the Canadian Partnership Branch and Canadian Crossroads International (CCI) to assess the lessons learned from the pilot with CCI and identify how other VCAs can benefit from that experience.

Recommendations to CIDA and the VCAs

4. CIDA, in association with the Volunteer Cooperation Agencies, should review and define how both will track and report the costs and benefits of volunteer cooperation programming in the future.

While VCA program designs and expected results have changed, stakeholders continue to rely, inappropriately, on the number of volunteers placed by VCAs and the cost per VCA placement. CIDA and the VCAs both need to: identify the right unit(s) of analysis, clarify expected benefits and associated costs, determine how and by whom benefits will be tracked and communicated, and allocate resources for tracking and communication) when determining the costs and benefits of volunteer cooperation.

5. CIDA, in association with the VCAs, should review the status and performance of VCAs' PE programs in one year to assess their overall effectiveness and areas for improvement.

Most of the VCAs' public engagement programs are in relatively early stages of development, while CIDA's own strategy is under development. In order to assess the relevance and congruence of these increasingly important investments, CIDA and the VCAs should consider undertaking a joint review of these public engagement programs of all VCAs in 2006. In order to manage resources effectively, CIDA and the VCAs could entertain the possibility of some peer reviews among the VCAs.

6. CIDA (CPB) and the VCAs should actively share knowledge about and champion VCP more effectively through internal and external channels. In particular, a description of VCP and the VCAs currently receiving VCP support should be provided on CIDA (CPB's) web site. CIDA should also consider the establishment of one or more awards, events and/or mechanisms as suggested in section 5.2.2 of this report. CIDA and VCAs should play proactive roles in sharing lessons and knowledge about VCP performance and challenges with others in Canada and internationally.

Recommendations to the VCAs

7. The VCAs should continue to fine-tune their DCO programming approaches to enhance their effectiveness in providing capacity development support to developing country organizations.

In particular, VCAs should pay increased attention to acquiring, developing and/or refining their own organizational assessment methodologies and diagnostic tools to assess DCO context and priority needs with regard to their longer-term sustainability. They should also set aside the necessary resources (financial, human and other) to prepare volunteers for their capacity development roles prior to placement, and support them with specialized expertise and/or support mechanisms once they are in place (including additional capacity development training of their program staff). VCAs should consider refining Organizational Development (OD) tools and approaches used by volunteers to build DCO capacities, and providing financial and other resources that may be required to complement the support provided by volunteers. Finally, VCAs should take measures to assess the impact of, and mitigate against, the potential disadvantages and pitfalls of multi-partner placements.

8. The VCAs should continue to develop and refine their PE strategies and programs.

In particular, VCAs should pay attention to defining a clear vision, purpose, design logic and results for these programs in terms of engaging Canadians (and not other agendas); defining clearer strategies for engaging RVs more effectively in their PE programs; involving other VCAs and/or other civil society organizations in Canada to realize increased efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of PE results; defining meaningful, appropriate indicators and allocating the resources required to track and measure performance of these programs; and identifying cost-effective ways to communicate the results of these programs with CIDA and other VCAs.

9. Building on the positive relationships already established in Canada, VCAs should explore if and how they can work more cooperatively with other VCAs and Canadian representatives abroad.

Building on the strengths of the relationships among the VCAs already established in Canada, VCAs should consider if and how these can be extended to their work in the South. Similarly, VCAs and CPB should explore how they might work more effectively and systematically with Canadian representatives abroad, and identify any support required from CPB to accomplish this.

10. VCAs should review and revise existing logic frameworks and PMFs for the local capacity building and PE components to ensure that planned results are realistic and focused.

In addition, the VCAs should review and revise the indicators used to measure progress to ensure that they are appropriate given the proposed results, are affordable to use in data collection, and that there is a balance of qualitative and quantitative measurements.

6.3   Lessons Learned

One of the benefits of conducting a review such as this is the opportunity it provides to identify lessons learned across a broad range of programs, people and organizations. The following lessons, identified in the course of this review, can provide insight into CIDA's future initiatives in volunteer cooperation, capacity development, and public engagement

Lessons about Volunteer Cooperation Programs

- Volunteer cooperation programs are more likely to be effective when staffed with properly selected and trained volunteers who are adequately supported, clear about their roles, have a balance of patience, tolerance, humility and self-awareness, and have high thresholds for working with ambiguity.

- Volunteer cooperation programs are more likely to be effective when VCAs invest in volunteer pre-departure and/or in-country training as well as DCO staff orientation to ensure that volunteer expectations are properly aligned with the DCO's needs and organizational capacity. In the age of the internet, this orientation, preparation and adjustment of expectations can be enhanced by direct communication between the volunteer and the DCO prior to departure.

- Volunteer placements work well when they are part of a larger country and/or sectoral program, when a support network is in place, when there are clear objectives for the placement, and when it fits within the overall program intervention.

- When initiatives are implemented with governments or government-controlled bodies, the presence of volunteers can push the limits of development awareness among senior government officials.

Lessons about Capacity Development

Capacity development efforts are more likely to be effective when:

- Those engaged in capacity building (both VCA in-country staff and volunteers) have knowledge of and grounding in capacity development frameworks and approaches, and have ready access to capacity development tools and resources, in addition to their field of professional competence.

- They are guided by a shared organizational diagnostic or assessment, capacity development objectives that have been clearly identified by the DCO, and a realistic strategy to achieve these.

- The concerned DCO can benefit from sharing with peers, within or across borders, who are facing the same or similar challenges in the same thematic area.

- Stakeholders share a common understanding on what is meant by capacity development.

Lessons about Public Engagement

Public engagement results are more likely to be sustainable when:

- They are guided by a cohesive public engagement strategy.

- Specific funding is allocated to public engagement activities.

- Development agencies work in partnership with others to give new momentum and support to existing activities and campaigns, or stimulate and give rise to new ventures.