INCLUSIVE ONLINE VOLUNTEERING FOR HUMANITARIAN AID

A rapid research on behalf of Viatores Christi

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Presented at VIVID-T volunteer management conference

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

ABBREVIATIONS

ASPEm	La Asociación Solidaridad Países Emergentes (The Emerging Countries Solidarity Association)
CBM	Christian Blind Mission
CBO	Community Based Organisation
COVID19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DID	Disability Inclusive Development
EU	European Union
EUAVI	The European Union Aid Volunteers Initiative
GN	Global North
GS	Global South
HA	Humanitarian Aid
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
INGO	International non-governmental organisations
IT	Information Technology
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MV	Marginalised Volunteers
OP	Older Person
OPD	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
OV	Online volunteering
PWD	Persons with disabilities
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VIVID-T	VIVID Technical Assistance
VSA	Volunteer Sending Agency
VSO	Volunteer Sending Organisation
WGQ	Washington Group Questionnaire
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

GLOSSARY

Capacity Building

The development of knowledge, skills and approaches in individuals and groups of people relevant in the design, development and maintenance of institutional and operational infrastructures that are locally meaningful.

Community based organisations

All such organisation, institutions or congregation of people, which have local area / village-based presence, maturity and structural arrangements. These are owned and managed by members. They are formal, legal entity or informal registered organizations maintaining separate books of accounts, systems & ways of working. They often have group identity-membership but are not usually affiliated to any religious, political or separatist parties / groups.

Disability

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) defines disability as: '… an evolving concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.3

Disability Inclusive Development (DID)

Disability-inclusive development (DID) means that all stages of development processes are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities. It requires that all persons be afforded equal access to education, health care services, work and employment, and social protection, among others.[1] DID is underpinned by a human rights-based approach to development – the belief that every human being has rights and that these rights cannot be denied to them. Core to this are the general principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) Article 3 which explicitly outlines these human rights principles in relation to persons with disabilities.

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[1] Toolkit on Disability for Africa – Disability Inclusive Development

EU Aid Volunteer Initiative (EUAVI)

EU Aid Volunteers is a European Union initiative that brings volunteers and organisations together from different countries to provide practical support to humanitarian aid projects and contribute to strengthening local capacity and resilience of disaster-affected communities. Participants in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative must be over 18 years of age and be a citizen of an EU Member State or a long-term resident in the EU. Volunteers receive accommodation and travel expenses, insurance, ongoing learning and development, a monthly allowance and a resettlement allowance to help with expenses of returning home.

Global North

While the authors recognise this term is geographically inaccurate in terms of physical location, the term is deemed a suitably neutral term to represent the economically developed societies of Europe, North America, Australia, Israel, Asia, South Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean that tend to be wealthy, technologically advanced and politically stable (though admittedly this is a fluid concept).

Global South

While the authors recognise this term is geographically inaccurate in terms of physical location, the term is deemed a suitably neutral term to represent the economically low income societies of Africa, India, Asia, Latin America, amongst others that tend to lag economically, technologically and / or, are politically unstable (though admittedly this is a fluid concept).

Humanitarian Aid

Humanitarian principles define what humanitarian aid as: delivering life-saving assistance to those in need, without any adverse distinction. They distinguish humanitarian aid from other activities, for example those of political, religious, ideological or military nature. Adherence to the humanitarian principles facilitates access and acceptance and helps humanitarian workers carry out their work.[2]

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[2] https://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/humanitarian-aid-and-civil-protection/humanitarian-principles_en

Online Volunteering (OV)

OV means volunteer activities that are completed, in whole or in part, via the internet on a home, work or public access computer, usually in support of or through a mission-based org." – also called virtual vol, telemonitoring, online mentoring, Involving International Online Volunteers.[3]

Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPD)

An organisation of persons with disabilities is an organisation that is controlled by people with disability (at least 51% people with disability at the board and membership levels). A OPD is different to
other disability sector organisations because it speaks to the empowered 'nothing about us without us' humanitarian aid ideological concept.

Rapid research

Rapid research seeks to compress study timeframes to deliver findings in short periods of time and with low budgets. Rapid research often involves team based research and may comprise different approaches and analysis but almost always uses an iterative approach in qualitative data analysis, as a reflexive process key to sparking insight and developing meaning. There is a lack of consensus within the research community on terminology around the exact definition of 'rapid'; in this instance it refers to a research that took twelve days in total with a team of two. Rapid research findings can stand alone but are most usually used to inform a longer and deeper study that expands certain aspects or seeks clarification of the original findings or is carried out as a second independent study of the topic.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (A/RES/61/106) was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and was opened for signature on 30 March 2007. There were 82 signatories to the Convention, 44 signatories to the Optional Protocol, and 1 ratification of the Convention. This is the highest number of signatories in history to a

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[3] Cravens 2006

UN Convention on its opening day. It is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century and is the first human rights convention to be open for signature by regional integration organisations. The Convention entered into force on 3 May 2008.

The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorisation of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced.[4]

VIVID-T

An EU funded project consisting of a European wide consortium approach to deliver technical assistance in humanitarian responses in order to ensure valuable volunteering and inclusion of persons with disabilities as well as other groups traditionally marginalised from international volunteering.

Volunteering (International)

The UN defines *volunteerism* as actions 'performed with free will, for the benefit of the community, and not primarily for financial gain'.[5] International volunteerism meets these same three criteria but is performed across an international border, in another country, or several countries.

International volunteerism takes many forms and consists of a vast range of program models. These models include long-term volunteers engaged in development cooperation, short-term 'professional' volunteers and pro bono technical advisors, young people participating in international volunteer work camps, volunteer disaster-response teams, and short- and long-term cultural service exchanges.

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[4] https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html
[5] Leigh, Robert et al, (2011) State of the World's volunteerism report: Universal values for global well being (P. Hockenos, Ed.). Bonn, Germany: United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

Washington Group Questionnaire

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG) promotes and coordinates international cooperation in the area of health statistics focusing on the development of disability measures suitable for census and national surveys.

The major objective of the WG is to provide information on disability that is comparable throughout the world. The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) was developed, tested and adopted by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG). The questions reflect advances in the conceptualization of disability and use the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) as a conceptual framework.

The WG-SS is intended for use in censuses and surveys.[6]

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[6] https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

An estimated 13 percent of people worldwide are over the age of 60. More than 46 percent of those who are over the age of 60 have a disability. Over 15 percent of the global population —one billion people plus, are estimated to have a disability, 80 percent of whom live in the Global South.

In the context of this research, we note that in the Global South, older persons, persons with disabilities and refugees consistently find themselves excluded from humanitarian aid and development gains. During natural and person-made crises and conflict these groups are disproportionately affected. In the Global North, specifically for this context, Europe, we note that older persons, persons with disabilities and persons who have resettled from countries in the Global South, as well as many other groups are denied access and opportunities to participate in humanitarian aid. The inclusion of people with disability and older people remains an under-prioritised or emerging area of work.

The European Union Aid Volunteers Initiative (EUAVI) provides opportunities to European citizens and long-term residents, from a wide range of backgrounds and with a diversity of skills and professional experience, to get involved in

- humanitarian aid projects
- support the provision of needs-based humanitarian and
- volunteering opportunities, through deployment and online-volunteering.

VIVID-T is a European Union funded programme that looks at technical assistance in humanitarian response, with a specific lens on volunteering and inclusion of persons with disabilities in these responses. The project's aim is built on the growing evidence of the need to adapt current existing programmes to be more inclusive of persons with disabilities. Through combining the practices of disability inclusion, volunteering and humanitarian action VIVID-T brings people with disabilities to the foreground of contributing to development.

The VIVID-T consortium is made up of seven organisations based in Ireland,

Finland, Belgium, Germany, and Italy that are a mix of volunteer sending organisations, disabled people's organisations as well as national and international non-governmental organisations.

Research Objective

This rapid research explores and reports on perceptions, opportunities and challenges of online volunteering for humanitarian aid, as well as whether it can provide avenues for inclusive humanitarian aid. It also asks how persons with disabilities and other groups traditionally excluded from humanitarian aid can engage in online volunteering.

Methodology

This rapid research explores the relatively new aspect of online volunteering for humanitarian aid with a view to delivering new insight into online volunteering for humanitarian aid. It does not pertain to lead to a conclusive result.

The methodology included a literature review of academic and grey literature. The primary research consisted of a mixed methods approach of qualitative key informant interviews and quantitative surveys. Conversations of between one and two hours with persons from each of three main humanitarian aid volunteer stakeholder groups took place. These consisted of individual (potential / experienced) volunteers; development partners located in the Global South and European international non-governmental organisations and volunteer sending agencies. Online quantitative Qualtrics survey software was used to collect responses from these groups using three distinct surveys.

Limitations

A number of limitations are outlined in the body of the report due mainly to budget and time restrictions, including the inability to include intellectual disabilities in the research. Additionally, the literature search found very little data regarding persons with disabilities and older persons involvement in humanitarian aid. It found even less data on the involvement of these groups in volunteering for humanitarian aid.

Findings

This research found a cohesion between the three survey groups

(qualitative and quantitative) on a wide number of perceptions of, opportunities for and challenges to online volunteering for humanitarian aid. These include motivations, type of activities online volunteering can add value to, who and what in the Global South should be supported through online volunteering and how to ensure successful delivery of humanitarian aid led online volunteering.

Motivation to support OV for HA is strong across all HA volunteering stakeholder groups. Issues around the need for investment in technology, challenges around recruitment, training, volunteer management, disability related assistive technology were all key issues raised.

Research participants find that these challenges, whilst not insignificant, can be addressed successfully with the appropriate planning, resource (human and financial) investment, programme design and monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, volunteer issues such as cultural awareness, context analysis and support suitability, areas important to meaningful support but less tangible to the online volunteer, can be addressed. By engaging with mentors and groups located in the Global North

and representative of those whom humanitarian aid aims to support in the Global South, many linkages and understandings are possible.

That online volunteering efforts should continue to ensure 'no-one is left behind' was a key theme that was emphasised by all qualitative research participants and was found to be a key consideration by quantitative research respondents.

Discussion

This research explores and reports on perceptions, opportunities and challenges of OV for HA and finds that all research participants perceive online volunteering to be a good idea. It provide additional and impactful opportunities to support European Union humanitarian responses, with particular attention to the most vulnerable victims, namely persons with disabilities and old age.

These same groups are marginalised in terms of discrimination and a lower quality of life in Europe. There is unanimous agreement that online volunteering would provide opportunities to shift this marginalisation and allow people traditionally excluded from participation

in humanitarian aid to play an important and effective role in the future. It also finds that PWDs, OPs, persons who have settled in Europe from the GS, and other groups such as long term unemployed, traditionally excluded from volunteering for humanitarian aid, offer valuable and often unique perspectives that can improve the EU's humanitarian responses.

Localisation and the Disability Inclusive Development, two areas gaining traction in humanitarian aid were linked clearly to online volunteering during this research. These areas are highlighted as ways in which online volunteering can add value to the EU's humanitarian response. They also align well with the EU's humanitarian principles and with EUAVI and VIVID-T's aims and objectives.

Localisation

The localisations agenda calls for local and national humanitarian actors to have greater presence, influence and leadership in humanitarian coordination mechanisms. With its ability to deliver technical support, capacity building and advocacy to local partners and other development actors, there is a strong

argument that online volunteering can help create an enabling environment for localisation.

At the heart of the localisation process is a transference of power to communities themselves, including grassroots development partners and the crisis-affected people. Online volunteering can support this shift in power to enable local actors to lead processes and decision-making, and eventually receive greater sums of direct funding.

Disability - Inclusive - Development

The benefits of providing services are well researched, particularly in international volunteering. Conversely, persons with disabilities and older persons are disproportionately affected by person made crises and conflict.

Disability-inclusive-development seeks to include people with disability in the humanitarian aid process by recognising their potential, valuing and respecting their contributions and perspectives, honouring their dignity, and effectively responding to their needs.[7]

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[7] AusAID (2008) Development for All: Towards a   disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009-2014

Generally speaking, there is an assumption that persons with disabilities and older persons are only in need of support humanitarian aid services and not ready or able to provide them.

Online volunteering is well positioned to provide greater opportunities to achieve self-realisation, especially for those who are challenged to participate in offline volunteering due to disability, age, financial or / and domestic obligations.[8] It is also well positioned to upscale the involvement of persons with disabilities and older persons in humanitarian aid creating opportunities for them to include their unique perspectives and understanding of disability / older person related issues. This in turn has the capacity to change the face of humanitarian responses for the better

Conclusion

This research provides insights into online volunteering and its ability to provide opportunities that far outweigh the challenges for humanitarian aid. It indicates compelling potential for online volunteering to strengthen the European Union's capacity to provide needs-based humanitarian responses as well as provide avenues for inclusive humanitarian aid.

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[8] Camichai-Hamburger, 2008; Cravens 2000, UNV 2015.

INTRODUCTION

Overview

An estimated 13 percent of people worldwide are over the age of 60.[9] More than 46 percent of those who are over the age of 60 have a disability.[10] Over 15 percent of the global population —one billion people plus, are estimated to have a disability, 80 percent of whom live in developing countries.[11]

The EU provides support for health and social protection for persons with disabilities (PWDs) and older persons (OPs) in many humanitarian aid contexts.

Disabilities may be visible or invisible, and onset can be at birth, or during childhood, working age years or older age. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) recognises that 'disability is an evolving concept'.[12] It also notes that PWDs include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.[13]

Both in the Global North (GN) and the Global South (GS), negative or / and uninformed attitudes lead to discrimination which usually means older persons (OPs), PWDs do not have an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of society. OPs and people who have resettled from South to North, specifically Europe, suffer similar problems. This all inevitably leads to societal inequality and a lack of representation globally and provide an impetus for inclusive development.

The European Union (EU) defines humanitarian aid (HA) as delivering life-saving assistance to those in need, without any adverse distinction. Based on international humanitarian principles and as set out in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid,[14] the EU provides needs-based humanitarian assistance to the people hit by person-made and natural disasters with particular attention to the most

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[9] The United Nations uses 60 years or over to refer to older persons, while recognising the diversity of older persons in terms of their needs, capabilities, lifestyles, experiences and preferences that are shaped by their age, gender, health, income, education, ethnicity and other factors.[9]

[10] https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/disability-and-ageing.html

[11] https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health

[12] UNCRPD 2006

[13] Ibid

[14] https://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/humanitarian-aid-and-civil-protection/european-consensus_en

vulnerable victims. Aid is channelled impartially to the affected populations, regardless of their race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.[15]

In the context of this research, we note that in the GS, OPs, PWDs and refugees consistently find themselves excluded from development gains. During natural and person-made crises and conflict these groups are disproportionately affected[16] and are over-represented among those living in poverty. An estimated 6.7 million persons with disabilities are forcibly displaced due to conflict and person-made crises.[17] In some cases, morbidity of PWDs in a disaster is estimated at a rate four times higher than those without disabilities.[18]

In the GN, specifically for this context, Europe, we note that OPS, PWDs and persons who have resettled from countries in the GS, as well as many other groups are denied access and opportunities to participate in HA. The inclusion of PWDs and OPs specifically, remains an under-prioritised or emerging area of work.[19]

Within the HA context CBM states that inclusive development occurs when the entire community, including people with a disability, benefit equally from development processes. Inclusive development encourages awareness of and participation by all marginalised groups. It specifically respects the diversity that disability brings and appreciates that it is an everyday part of the human experience. Disability-inclusive development sets out to achieve equality of human rights for people with disabilities as well as full participation in, and access to, all aspects of society."[20]

Volunteering, generally associated with in person, 'offline' activities, is defined as "Any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organisation."[21] International volunteerism, generally 'offline', takes many forms, and consists of a vast range of program models. These models include long-term volunteers engaged in development cooperation, professional volunteers and

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[15] https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid_en
[16] The report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit (2016)
[17] Ibid
[18] https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/backgrounder_article_11.pdf
[19] Robinson. A, Marella. M, Logam. L (2020) Gap Analysis: the Inclusion of People with Disabilities and Older People in Humanitarian Response
[20] CBM Disability Inclusive Development Toolkit, 2017
[21] Wilson J (2000) Volunteering. Annual Review of Sociology 26: 215–240.

technical advisors engaged in short, medium and long term service exchanges. Offline volunteering usually takes place at a fixed point in time and is restricted to localised activities as well as to a limited variety of topics.[22] Online volunteering (OV) can be defined as "A type of civic engagement where the volunteers perform their tasks using the internet either from their home or other offsite locations."[23] Online volunteering for humanitarian aid is the performance of tasks and support based on a sense of solidarity with fellow global citizens in order to solve problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character. Volunteering contributes in a very tangible way to that goal by connecting and empowering people, releasing potential, building futures and contributing to mutual learning.

EUROPEAN UNION AID VOLUNTEERS INITIATIVE

The European Union Aid Volunteers Initiative (EUAVI) provides opportunities to European citizens and long-term residents, from a wide range of backgrounds and with a diversity of skills and professional experience, to get involved in

- humanitarian aid projects,
- support the provision of needs-based humanitarian aid (aka development assistance / aid) and
- volunteering opportunities, through deployment and online-volunteering.

The objective of the EUAVI is to contribute to strengthening the Union's capacity to provide needs-based HA aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering, maintaining human dignity and strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities in third countries.
The EUAVI aims at these objectives by means of disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and by enhancing the link between relief, rehabilitation and development. In its latest implementations, a particular attention has been devoted to the links between climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness and reduction.

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[22] Amichai-Hamburger Y (2008) Potential and promise of online volunteering. Computers in Human Behaviour 24: 544–562; Cravens, J (2000) Virtual volunteering: online volunteers providing assistance to human service agencies. Journal of Technology in Human Sciences 17 (2–3): 119–136
[23] Mukherjee D (2011) Participation of older adults in virtual volunteering: a qualitative analysis. Ageing International 36 (2): 253–266

VIVID-T

VIVID-T is a European Union funded programme that looks at technical assistance in humanitarian response, with a specific lens on volunteering and inclusion of persons with disabilities in these responses. The project's aim is built on the growing evidence of the need to adapt current existing programmes to be more inclusive of persons with disabilities. It also mirrors the United Nations (UN) support for disability-inclusive development (DID) as an essential condition for a sustainable future.

Through combining the practices of disability inclusion, volunteering and humanitarian action VIVID-T brings people with disabilities to the foreground of contributing to development. Without their involvement organisations will continue to face difficulties achieving universal inclusion.

The project's consortium is made up of seven organisations based in Ireland, Finland, Belgium, Germany, and Italy that are a mix of volunteer sending organisations (VSAs)[24], disabled people's organisations (DPOs) as well as national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs)s. The organisations that take part of the consortium are:

- Abilis Foundation
- ASPEm
- CBM Global
- CBM Ireland
- European Disability Forum
- Tearfund Ireland
- Viatores Christi

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This research explores and reports on perceptions, opportunities and challenges of OV for HA, as well as whether it can provide avenues for inclusive HA. It also asks how PWDs and other groups traditionally excluded from HA, can engage in OV for

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[24] Referred to on this report as volunteer sending agencies (VSAs) to avoid confusion with the volunteer sending organisation named VSO.

HA. As a result of this research VIVID-T consortium members are expected to gain a clearer understanding of the potential for OV within their networks as well as the opportunities and the possible challenges in engaging with online volunteers.

METHODOLOGY

This rapid research explores the relatively new aspect of OV for HA. One aspect of the exploratory (interpretative research or grounded theory) research approach, is the process of investigating an area in order to have a better understanding of the issue/s. Exploratory research is open ended and does not usually lead to a conclusive result but gains familiarity with and acquires new insight into the issue/s.

Desk Top Review

A blind literature search covering research, including quantitative, qualitative and quasi (semi experiential) was conducted. To ensure the information included could be as varied and informative as possible, we also investigated a wide range of grey literature as well as conducting a hand search on the literature that reaped the most useful data in the initial search.

Mixed approach

A mixed-method approach was used allowing for a more comprehensive multi stakeholder process. The quantitative elements emphasised the measurement and analysis of causal relationships whilst the qualitative aspect, based on a topic guide drawn from the literature, was carried out in a conversational format facilitating the development and interpretation of new and existing information.

Qualitative

 The following methods were deployed for the evaluation:
- Key Informant Semi structured One-to-One Zoom conversations (lasting between one and two hours) with:
- Representatives of Volunteering Sending Agencies (VSAs) and International Non- Governmental Organisations (INGOs) located in Europe x 5
- Experienced European volunteers x 3

- Representatives of Development Partners located in the GS x 3

Quantitative

Quantitative data was collected via online surveys using Qualtrics software. Bespoke surveys were designed to explore online volunteering and inclusion from the unique perspectives of each of three main HA volunteer stakeholder groups: the individual (potential / experienced) volunteer; the development partner located in the GS and the INGO / VSA based in Europe. All surveys included approximately 20 questions each and took an average of eight minutes to complete.

The Washington Group's extended set of functioning questions (WGQ) was used in the online surveys. By using the WGQs the researchers expected that an increase in numbers of persons with disabilities would be identified thus having an important impact on the authenticity and relevance of the programming.

Measures

Various demographics measured for individual volunteers included age, gender and nationality. For INGOs and partners, measurements included geographical headquarters, HA activities, and programme recipient groups. Following this, various questions measured each stakeholder's experience with volunteering, OV and their perspectives on OV, including their motivations to use it; the challenges to partaking in it; its successes; what activities they use or would use online; what online platforms they use or would use and whether it has an impact for the organisation or the people they support. Furthermore, each stakeholder's perspective on the potential impact of OV for the inclusion of PWD, OPs and MV groups was recorded as well as the barriers to the use of OV.

The questions for inclusion were written by researcher Sharron Kelliher, and discussed with and added to the survey by researcher Molly Egan.

Recruitment and sampling

Participants were recruited with the aim to ensure inclusion and representation. Misean Cara, an international and Irish faith-based missionary movement working with some of the most marginalised and vulnerable communities in developing countries forwarded the partner survey to its entire network (45).[25] Partners of Viatores Christi (11) and other consortium member VSAs and INGOS were also sent a link to the partners survey via email (quantity unknown). All consortium members (7) were requested to complete the online survey as well as distribute to their country networks (quantity unknown). Individual volunteers were recruited by emailing various humanitarian and development aid organisations, as well as organisations supporting persons with disabilities and older persons to ensure representation of these groups in our sample (quantity unknown).

Online survey responses

Individual survey: Respondents (n=46) included 30 'female', 15 'male', 'one prefer not to say', aged 26-87 (m= 53.06). The majority of respondents were from Ireland, but also included responses from a variety of other European countries. Seven respondents identified themselves as older persons and one identified as persons with a disability on accordance with the Washington Group Questionnaire Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) guidelines.[26]

Partners: A total of 19 partners completed the survey, all providing a variety of services to various groups in the humanitarian and development aid sector.

INGOs: A total of 19 INGOs completed the survey, based in a variety of continents, but mostly Africa, Europe and Asia.

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[25] https://www.miseancara.ie/about-misean-cara/members/
[26] https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/

LIMITATIONS

- The literature review search found very little data regarding PWD and OP involvement in HA. It found even less data surrounding the involvement of these groups in volunteering for HA.

- There were time and resource challenges that prevented the researchers from investigating the links between climate change adaptation, disaster preparedness and reduction and OV.

- People with limitations in intellectual functioning, though an important PWD group were not included in the research due to the limitations on time. However, it is noted that as a group they are more likely than other disabled people to feel they have experienced discrimination and less likely to be in paid work[27] and by extrapolation volunteering.

- "Online volunteering is a simple, universal and effective way for organisations and volunteers to work together to address sustainable development challenges anywhere in the world – from any device."[28] Recognising the existing UN OV service, some desk top research took place. However, there was inadequate time to research the UN OV platform more fully or to speak to UN volunteers or / and other stakeholders.

- Online volunteering as a term, has the option to cover a myriad of online support /volunteering that can include anything from proposal writing to app development to the kind of support available on platforms such as Pledgework, Digital Detectives etc. The scope of this research allows for a focus on the more traditional HA aspects of programme design, implementation and impact and left little room for the more innovative aspects of online support.

- A group who we do not see much of in terms of international volunteering are persons were born in countries in the GS who have settled in Europe. The research tried to engage with this group directly but due to time limits was unable to.

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[27] Bridget Williams, Phil Copestake, John Eversley and Bruce Stafford (2008) Experiences and Expectations of Disabled People. Office for Public Management, Icarus Collective and University of Nottingham
[28] https://www.onlinevolunteering.org/en

- Despite reaching it to persons with disability groups, given the timelines for this rapid research, we had some, but relatively limited interaction with this group.
- Finally, while funding institutions and governmental donors would be important to include in research concerned with online volunteering for humanitarian aid, as a rapid piece of work it was not possible to include them here.

FINDINGS

Qualitative Key information conversations

Is online volunteering for Humanitarian Aid a good idea?

All interviewees state they believe OV in the context of humanitarian aid (using the EU's definition) is a good idea with one person stating that it was a "no brainer". Implementation is however deemed to have many challenges despite its potential to be a "game changer".

"It is good for inclusion and sharing experience and expertise, knowledge, between South and North; it is one of the best ideas. But it is limited in many ways."
C2

Opportunities for online volunteering for Humanitarian AID

OV's unique opportunity to add value to HA is the general tone of all of the interviews. The key areas where it could add value are as follows:

- **Inclusion**

  Inclusive development and its potential for positive impact was one of the overarching themes that emerged from the qualitative research. Many aspects of inclusivity were discussed. The common acknowledgment is that individuals within certain groups are traditionally excluded from accessing opportunities to engage with international 'offline' volunteering. Most interviewees highlight the diversity that exists also within the groups usually excluded from volunteerism and HA. These groups were broadly described and discussed as marginalised volunteers (MVs) under the headings of:

    - Persons with disabilities
    - Older persons
    - Long term unemployed or / and those who financially cannot afford to take extended period of time away from work

- European citizens who also identify as dual or previous citizens of GS countries
- Persons who want to help but don't want to travel overseas (various reasons).

All European research participants who work or had worked / volunteered on HA programmes state there is a dearth of diversity amongst their European peers. Programmes that support older people, refugees and PWDs, are similarly devoid of representation. The consensus is that diversity is missing, not because people from these groups do not want to support HA, but that as one interview put it, there are not many opportunities for a people from these groups to volunteer, or indeed work in HA. Conversely, low-no involvement is also due to a lack of expectations and a certain acceptance of the current status quo that European PWDs are rarely involved in humanitarian responses.

"Strictly thinking from a PWD point of view, there are not that many chances to do development work abroad."
C3

"If I want to help but I also want to raise my family and stay in my country, then I have no options to help in other countries."
C1

"A PWD doesn't even think of development work as an option for them."
C3

The point that in Europe inclusivity of PWDs, migrants and older people is far from flawless came up in conversations many times.

"There are many differences within Ireland in terms of inclusivity….in terms of technical and mental aspects of inclusivity."
C5

Despite Europe's 'house not being fully in order', the need for HA to be more inclusive was made very clear throughout the research. Some people positively noted the Disability Inclusive Development (DID) approach, is beginning to gain traction. They also however noted the sector's sluggishness in rolling out DID. All interviewees affirmed that inclusive development requires 360 degree support and that OV could go some way to support its realisation.

"By having access to online volunteers, we would see more PWDs, older people etc. involved in humanitarian aid. "
C2

There is a strong focus on how OV can facilitate a speeding up of DID to create a groundswell of positive impact.

"It would help to change minds about PWDs – to reverse narrow mindsets."
C2

"It could be a way of championing the positive ability of PWD."
C8

- **Unique perspectives**

Due to its flexibility and low costs to volunteers, OV can facilitate larger numbers of European volunteers. This aspect of OV in itself was highlighted as important by most interviewees. It was not an area development partners felt in a position to talk about.

Additionally, the unique perspectives and values MVs bring to HA was also discussed. The conversations unanimously find these groups bring better understanding of the issues their counterparts are experiencing in the GS. That said, it is important, as one interviewee said, not to assume that every European PWD online volunteer wants to automatically work with PWD programmes in the humanitarian context.

"PWDs are usually sent to work with PWDs in other countries but maybe they don't have to now - they definitely don't always want to."
C5

Whilst interviewees acknowledged there are many privileges and advantages for PWDs and OPs located in the GN, these groups also experience marginalisation and discrimination here. The research finds agreement that problems experienced are better understood and innovative solutions, advocacy for change better developed when people working on these issues feel they can relate to each other. Some interviewees argued that having more marginalised groups involved in international OV could build communities of understanding between PWDs in GS and GN. This could in turn drive best practice and innovation across borders, creating higher demand for better access to technology generally but also to disability accessible technology, inclusive programme design innovations and so on.

"If PWDs are volunteering programmes will be different."
C3

One interviewee candidly spoke about how many countries, her / his own included, in the GS have ratified conventions and developed policies to support OPs, refugees, PWDs etc. but commitment from political and institutional leaders is disappointing and implementation remains extremely slow. Thus awareness raising would be a good objective of OV.

OV presents the opportunity for a substantial increase in linkages between affected and marginalised groups, as well as those simply interested in supporting a more equal society. Challenges met by OPs and PWDs in the GS in particular, as well as the efforts made by grass roots organisations will become better known and better understood and in time OV can create a groundswell of advocacy on behalf of those the grassroots organisations and individuals working on and / or affected by the lack of policy implementation. Voices and action will be linked up global stage.

"Online volunteering can help get our voices heard globally and maybe help to advocate for change."
C6

Additionally, the value of life experience is a key benefit for HA.

"Retired people have a life of expertise and skills etc. and can be game changers."
C10

Who does online volunteering best serve?

Discussions with all interviewees were held around how and who European OV might best serve. All three interviewee cohorts: GS development partners; European NGOs/VSAs and European experienced / potential online volunteers associated OV with including more PWDs and other MV groups in HA. OV was lauded by all as a means to facilitate MVs and provide them the opportunity to participate more fully in society. Additionally, all interviewees acknowledged that OV must also positively impact help the most vulnerable in the HA context, aligning clearly with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

However, concerns were posed about whether it is possible to provide OV directly to this group given the many challenges to direct recipients of HA, such as education, relatability and power relation issues between OVs and programme recipients, literacy and language issues, technological knowhow, access to the internet etc.

Development partners and European INGO country offices are working directly with individuals, families and communities across a wide range of areas and with a wide range of inputs, outputs and outcomes. Conversations about the important role of local partners in supporting the most vulnerable in the GS were plenty. Much time was also spent discussing the need to ensure these local bodies receive the support to continue, expand and do their work more effectively. There was a clear call for an

increase in capacity building / skills gap plugging for this cohort and a sense that this could be facilitated well by OV.

By the end of each discussion, all interviewees noted that whilst OV should be designed to impact the vulnerable person in HA context, it may not immediately be possible to provide OV support directly to this group. Ultimately all interviewees noted that initially at least, OV would prove more effective if provided at partner level, to support fundraising, programme design and proposal writing, governance, organisational structuring, programme design etc.

"Services that DPOs and other organisations require expert services for IT, developing documents, writing reports, developing strategic plans – these are very rare skills especially for grassroots orgs."
C4

One interviewee pointed out that grassroots organisations depend on small amounts of donor funds and the 'officer' (staff) salaries are low, thus the experience and talent seen in INGOs in the GN and in many GS INGO country offices is not available at this level. The negative effect this has on grassroots organisations was also pointed out.

"Repeatedly there are a handful of embassy grant winners that always win – from larger orgs."
C2

Many smaller partner organisations, as well as the GS country offices of larger European INGOs have availed of in-country volunteers to help capacity build staff and fundraise as well as co design and co-implement programmes. The various ways existing OV and remote support (pre COVID and COVID 19 era) take place with the local development partner/country office, the disabled person organisation (DPO), community based organisations (CBOs) etc. was also discussed at length. Agreement that volunteering in person and online forms are valuable supports and that OV should not mean the demise of in-country volunteering. However, given the current situation regarding COVID19 restrictions and the reality that in country

volunteering will be a slow burn if it happens at all, in the next 12 months, OV was deemed very important in terms of its flexibility and safety for volunteers, development partner and programme recipients. Interviewees felt that if OV is carried out with capacity building in mind, and the programme recipient as the key beneficiary, whether directly or indirectly, it has the potential to ensure all HA stakeholders continue to give and receive support which in turn will also promote the power and ability of local development. It will also ramp up the diversity and unique offerings of otherwise MVs and ensure they have the opportunity to fulfil their lives, terms of 'helping' internationally, as they see fit.

What would online volunteering look like?

Interviewees were enthusiastic to brain-storm what OV might look like going forward. That UN OV already exists and is gaining ground as complementary to the UN's efforts on the ground is appreciated. European HA research participants feel that OV would prove extremely valuable if it could, as much as possible, reflect physical volunteering i.e. with a strong relationship and trust building element. Discussions on how OV could ensure that 'no one is left behind' were varied but everybody agreed that OV is highly valuable as a key to improving HA programming. However, not dissimilar to traditional volunteering, it was said many times that

"You need to be very focused on what you are trying to achieve."
C1

VSAs and NGOs were the most concerned with how the individual aspects of OV are delivered. However, all interviewees noted that whilst sometimes capacity building via online platforms could be useful on a piecemeal basis, it would prove more impactful if delivered either as part of an overall needs based capacity building programme for the organisation. And that the organisation must clarify how building their capacity can benefit programming and those most vulnerable in their contexts. OV can support either one or mor individuals individual either piecemeal or as an the entire development programme overall but, in the long run, it must bring improved change to the lives of the partner programme recipients.

Individuals without past experience as volunteers were less concerned with the integration of online supports citing the value of individualised aspects of OV in areas like proposal writing, finance upskilling etc. as useful on a standalone basis. Those who had experienced in-country volunteering when prompted, expressed the importance of ensuring the various ways OV can be delivered and the many elements that can be facilitated by OV, impact programme recipients directly or indirectly. Development partners did not initiate discussions about how the programme recipients would benefit, though when the discussions expanded confirmed this to be their end goal in any case. All development partners noted that any improvement in their capacity means they can better serve the programme recipients overall.

The length of an OV support was discussed at length and most agreed that it depended on the needs of the partner organisation and programme and that one of the key advantages of OV is its flexibility and adaptability.

"It depends on the recipient organisation – if a grassroots organisation needs support in different areas – a volunteer for one year may not be needed. It could be that there is one volunteer for two months and another in another area for a month etc. etc."
C9

"If the organisation is asking this is what we need then that is what we need to answer – there needs to be some kind of flexibility and the programme needs to be designed to build the programme with them so all components come together."
C3

Another interviewee commented that it could be the role of the INGO or VSA and not the online volunteer to be the overall programme keeper so that:

" Even if not the volunteer, the organisation who is sending (deploying) the online volunteer can stay with the grassroots organisation and ensure the outcomes are met."
C10

There was also a huge desire by almost every interviewee that OV should include relationship and trust building and not just become skills transferring.

"There's a big difference between someone watching a YouTube 'accounting' tutorial to learn a skill and working with an online volunteer, talking through nuances, overall programme objectives, impacts etc."
C5

Finally, the predominant approach across the three groups is that European generated OV support should reflect and be aligned to current in-country volunteering and programme related support. The desire for a needs based, participatory and realistic focus, driven by the development partners in the GS with online volunteers managed by European VSAs / INGOs was also a key theme. Many went so far as to say that OV must be asked for and the impact it is required to deliver at grassroots and community level must be provable.

Online volunteering for Humanitarian Aid – Challenges

Whilst there were high levels of positivity amongst research participants about the prospects of and for OV in HA, there are many challenges that need to be addressed in order to deliver successful OV. How to do this was discussed many times. The incumbent volunteering challenges of white saviourism, volunteerism as self-serving, the potential for corruption intended and unintended, safeguarding and other typical volunteering issues were included in these conversations with varying degrees of attention. However, the overarching areas that challenge the positive impact of OVs were technology, cultural awareness and creating positive trusting relationships. A key message was the need to ensure there is a capacity building and power shifting element to OV.

"A sensible role is needed or the volunteer and the volunteer recognising they are not there to do the old fashioned helping and doing things for people."
C4

- **Technology**

Time did not permit a strong discussion about the digital divide, the inequality that currently exists between the North and South - the existing and somewhat growing access gap to modern information and communications technology. However, the challenge to facilitating OV was a key aspect of most conversations.

All interviewees, except those individuals who had not volunteered / worked in the HA context cited technology as a key barrier to the success of OV. However, it was stated many times that this is a cost issue and not an availability issue. Almost all GS countries have good internet with national and international organisations operating successfully in these contexts. That said, access to the internet is often beyond the reach financially, of the partners. In order for development organisations in the GS to take advantage of OV as a support, they will need help. Most interviewees stated that there would need to be some investment by VSAs, INGOs and /or donors to ensure technology, software, hardware and sometimes training, could be put in place for development partners.

We are often working on very old hardware because we cannot afford to update it.
C5

"Internet is there but we can't afford it."
C3

"It is true some rural places have very bad access but with investment of dongles we can manage that."
C2

"Internet connectivity and hardware can be troublesome – but primarily because the investment in global south is challenging."
C7

- **Cultural awareness**

  In-country volunteerism allows for better cultural awareness for all volunteer stakeholder groups. This was a constant theme of all research conversations. This in turn highlighted concerns by almost everybody about the lack of opportunity to access adequate cultural awareness and adaptation during OV. All training programmes for European volunteers discussed currently involve some element of cultural awareness. Research participants noted the importance of 'on the job' volunteer learning and how being in country "really helps you get a better understanding of the context which you are supporting" (C2). Each experienced volunteer said that being in country changed them on some level and that the learning they received in country helped them to be more effective in gaining both their personal and professional objectives. It was also noted in every conversation that having a better understanding of a culture means, as a volunteer you can make a better impact. Concerns were constantly raised about how OV could facilitate adequate cultural awareness in order to be impactful.

  "Helping is about more than skills transfer"
  C3

- **Relationship / Trust building**

  Because international volunteers are often perceived as relatively neutral and impartial, they appear to instil a high level of trust among those they work with.[29] This perception forms a solid foundation for effective volunteering in country and hopefully online. Those volunteers who have travelled to and worked in the HA context spoke about how important their relationships were with their colleagues and programme recipients. Relationships and trust make for more effective volunteering both in terms of the personal experience but also to ensure impact and attaining their programme related objectives. Partners spoke also about how trust is such a big part of the effectiveness of

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[29] Benjamin J. Lough & Lenore E. Matthew University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014 International Volunteering and Governance: The United Nations Volunteering programme and the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (2014)

volunteers; they were not as concerned however, as other research participants about the lack of relationship building opportunities facilitated by OV. One partner highlighted that they have been building relationships with many partners in the NG without meeting them much if sometimes at all. This may be why this is not as much a concern to them. Individuals and VSA / INGO conversations highlighted high levels of concern about how relationships could be built online in order to ensure effective volunteering for HA impact.

"One major/ unique disadvantage of OV is the lack of face to face contact – lack of social interaction for volunteers, lack of familiarisation of OV with the organisation."
C4

- **Recruitment, Training and online volunteer management**

  - **Diversity: Supports**
    The additional resources needed to recruit train and manage a wide scope of volunteers with important skills as well as various inclusion support needs was discussed, though it wasn't something most interviewees considered until prompted.

    INGOs and VSAs in particular recognise that terms such as OPs, new citizens, PWDs includes a wide diversity of offerings and conversely a broad set of support needs to facilitate these offerings. For example PWD is an umbrella term that encompasses a broad range of persons with mobility, sight, speech, hearing and other impediments as well as the varying degrees by which people experience such impediments. Intellectual disability, older persons and the extremely wide group that new EU citizens encompass also present issues around how to t effectively and efficiently support the diversity of inclusion needs.

"Online accessibility is not so easy – we are still struggling with visually and hearing impaired – how to conduct them in a team way – using other jamboard etc platforms. You would really need to take care of accessibility."
C5

- **Diversity: Culture and Language**

  OV facilitates a diversity of volunteer nationalities / demographics which presents its own challenges. These challenges will be faced by the INGO / VSA deploying the online volunteer who potentially receive applications from persons located all over the world.

  "How do we manage that? On this end we need to have the discussions, interview the people online, match them online. It probably needs more resources on this end to get to know them both and their needs."
  C11

  It will also be a challenge for the receiving development partner and possibly the programme recipient.

  "For the receiving partner there will be a bigger diversity of nationalities coming and getting used to and being best able to work with and support them to be impactful will be a challenge as currently partners receive volunteers from one country."
  C10

- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)**

  Monitoring, evaluating and learning for impact, both in terms of capacity building but also at programme recipient level was cited as a big challenge to the effective impact of OV.

  "How do we know it is really supporting the end person?"
  C1

"How does the fund management work?"
C4

Nonetheless, almost as many people who cited MEL as an issue countered the challenge with examples of how they or other peer organisations are managing remote monitoring, evaluation and learning. Many noted that since COVID19 has stopped volunteers and INGO workers travelling, good engagement and capacity building is carried out by in country volunteers, including reporting on programme impact and budgets. One research participant suggested using in country volunteers for monitoring, evaluation and learning. Another cited how currently, local consultants are being used to do monitoring for some INGOs without country offices in the contexts where they provide funding and partner capacity building support.

"Programme could have different OV parts and you build into that package the monitoring bit then some volunteer would evaluate it and see how the monitoring is done – a more long term thing."
C5

"Sometimes our partner in the West uses local consultants to monitor and then sometimes a secondary review by them once a year ensures they know and can learn from the programme."
C7

CAUTION

Local grassroots organisations are often the only groups willing to work in remote. There was some discussion around whether supporting individuals at organisational level through OV could create a secondary problem whereby professionalising local NGO/DPO staff could result in an exodus of staff into larger better paid local and international NGOs/DPOs etc.

QUANTITATIVE

INDIVIDUAL (EXPERIENCED / POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER) RESPONSES
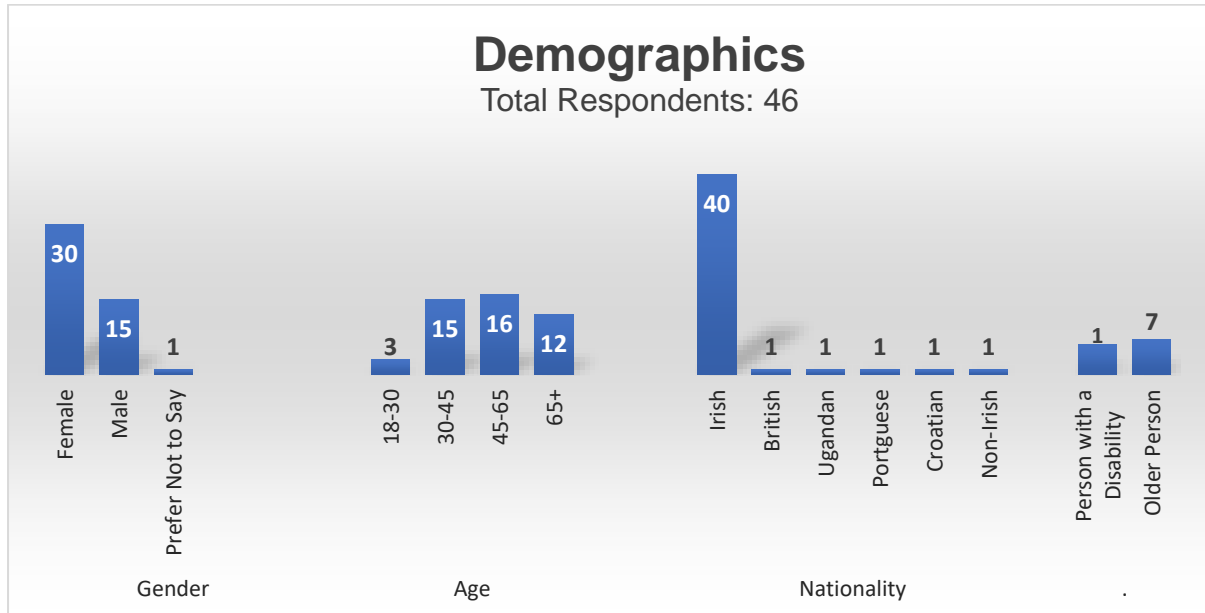
Figure 1 Demographics of respondents
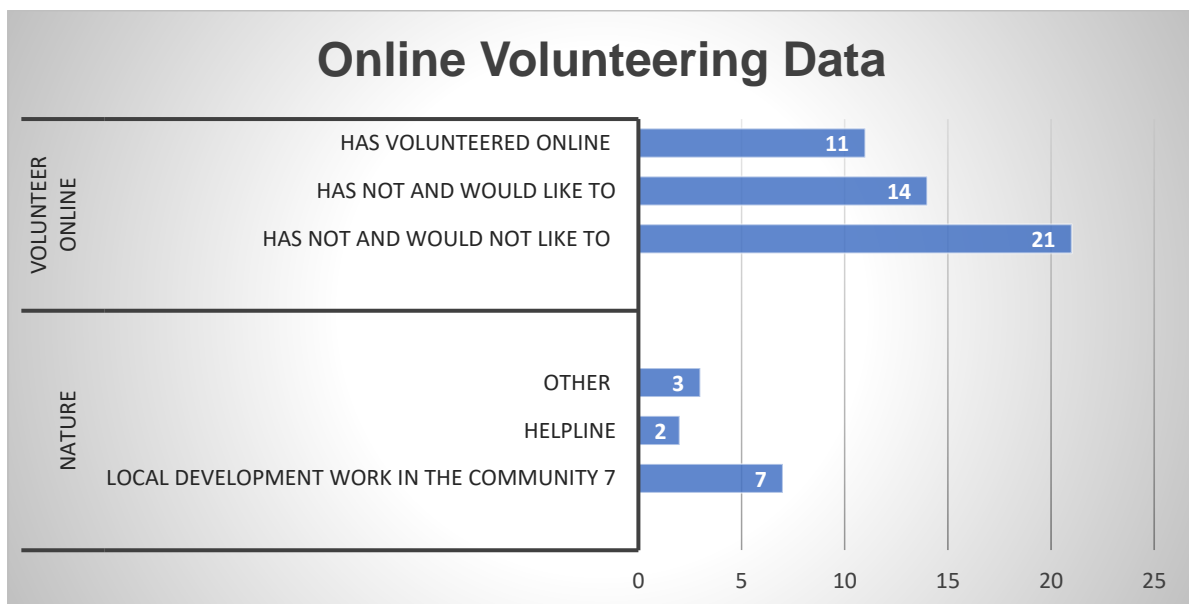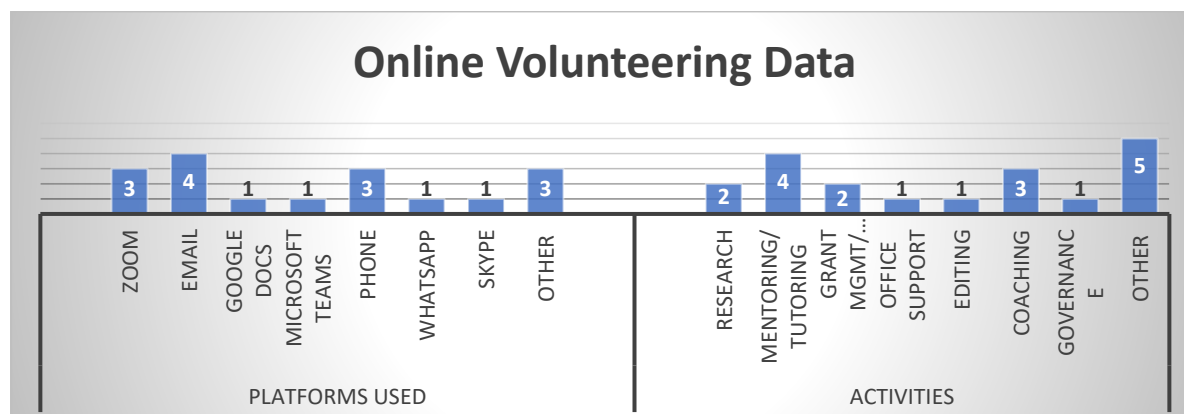

Figure 2 Respondents experience of online volunteering

Figure 3 Online volunteering platforms used

Online Volunteering Data

ZOOM	EMAIL	GOOGLE DOCS	MICROSOFT TEAMS	PHONE	WHATSAPP	SKYPE	OTHER	RESEARCH	MENTORING/ TUTORING	GRANT MGMT/…	OFFICE SUPPORT	EDITING	COACHING	GOVERNANCE	OTHER
3	4	1	1	3	1	1	3	2	4	2	1	1	3	1	5

PLATFORMS USED — ACTIVITIES

The analysis in this section has four themes; motivations to volunteer online, challenges to volunteer online, the impact of volunteering online, OV and inclusion.

MOTIVATIONS

Overall, results in this theme indicate that the motivations for both those who have and have not volunteered online previously but would like to are very similar. They are presented together in the graph below.

The most common motivation for both those who have and have not volunteered online is to "help in a way that is convenient and flexible". For those who had volunteered online previously, another common motivation is "to utilise time and skills" followed by "being part of an admired sector in an informal manner".

For those who had not volunteered previously but would like to, the second most common motivation was "to contribute to world social issues", followed by "to utilise time and skills". Interestingly to "meet volunteering requirements for work or a qualification" was not a motivation to volunteer online for any respondent.

Figure 4 Online Volunteering Motivation

MOTIVATIONS TO VOLUNTEER ONLINE

Bar chart with vertical axis from 0 to 30 in increments of 5. Categories and approximate values:
- To Help in a Convenient and Flexible Way: 24
- To Contribute to World Social Issues: 17
- To Learn New Skills: 2
- To Use my Time and Skills: 14
- To Learn About Other Cultures: 10
- To be Part of a Sector I Admire Informally: 13
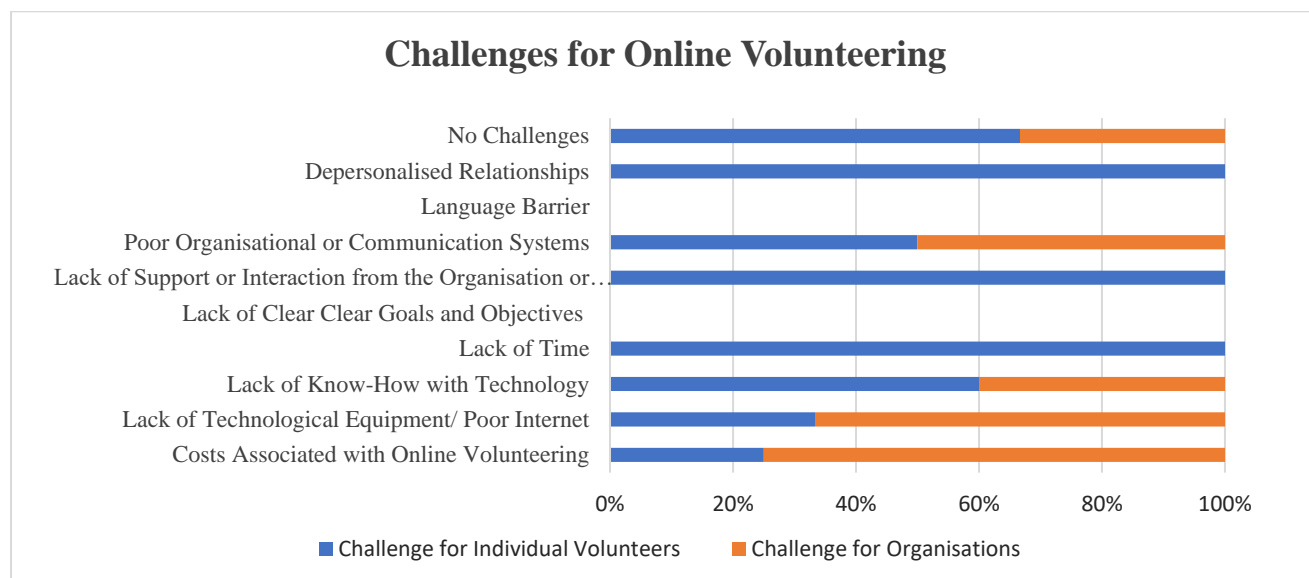- Need Volunteer Experience: 0

CHALLENGES

Despite results indicating strong motivation to volunteer online, there remains barriers and challenges to OV. These are mentioned in the graph below as challenges to those who have volunteered online, as well as reasons for those who do not wish to volunteer online.

A challenge highlighted by all volunteers is the lack of face-to-face contact, making communication between the volunteer, service user, and the organisation very "impersonal". Respondents mentioned "depersonalised relationships" and "lack of good communication systems" as barriers to the success of OV, however, these depersonalised relationships are a larger problem for those who have not volunteered online than for those who have.

Other challenges include a "lack of technological equipment, software and internet". However, results indicate this is a larger barrier for organisations than volunteers. Some older volunteers mentioned a "lack of technological know-how" as a challenge for them. Interestingly, many respondents also felt that there were no challenges for themselves or for the organisation to carry out OV.

26

Figure 5 Challenges for Online volunteering

Challenges for Online Volunteering

No Challenges	
Depersonalised Relationships	
Language Barrier	
Poor Organisational or Communication Systems	
Lack of Support or Interaction from the Organisation or…	
Lack of Clear Clear Goals and Objectives	
Lack of Time	
Lack of Know-How with Technology	
Lack of Technological Equipment/ Poor Internet	
Costs Associated with Online Volunteering	

■ Challenge for Individual Volunteers   ■ Challenge for Organisations

IMPACT OF ONLINE VOLUNTEERING

Many respondents who volunteered online found that it met their expectations, had an impact on those they were supporting, and had many successes. The most common success was the satisfaction of making a difference, as well as the educational aspect of OV; learning new skills and about other cultures. Another older participant mentioned gaining confidence online as a success.

Most respondents mentioned that they could build a good relationship with the beneficiary online, depending on the individual and technology, and felt that the people they supported benefited from their support and it provided a small, but significant moment of happiness for both the volunteer and beneficiary.
Most respondents also said they would volunteer online again, would recommend OV to a friend, and would like to volunteer online if they have not already. Indeed, very few may not share this view, like one respondent who noted that due to the international nature of HA OV, they were unsure if it had an impact.

ONLINE VOLUNTEERING AS INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

It is important to note that the majority of participants who had volunteered online were not PWD or older persons. Interestingly, three out of four felt that they're being a PWD or older person did not have an impact, only one out of four said yes, saying that it expanded their perspective as an older person.

When asked about disability inclusion and OV, only two out of nine respondents said OV would have no impact on disability inclusion, while seven said it would have some impact. Those that indicated some impact reasoned that IV would allow "opportunities for PWD to participate in interventions", to "advocate for a rights-based approach from all angles", and to "volunteer from the safety of their homes".

GLOBAL SOUTH PARTNER RESPONSES

Figure 6 Humanitarian Aid Activities of Global South Partners

Partner's Humanitarian Aid Activities

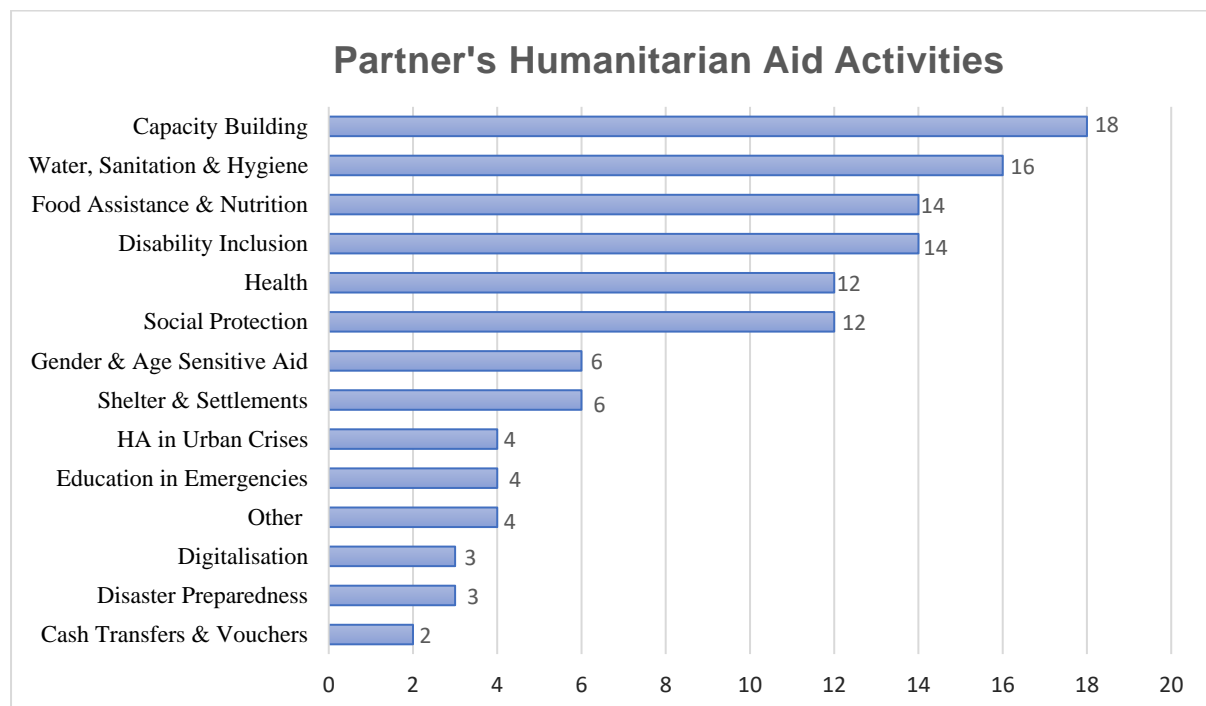| Activity	Value
Capacity Building	18
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	16
Food Assistance & Nutrition	14
Disability Inclusion	14
Health	12
Social Protection	12
Gender & Age Sensitive Aid	6
Shelter & Settlements	6
HA in Urban Crises	4
Education in Emergencies	4
Other	4
Digitalisation	3
Disaster Preparedness	3
Cash Transfers & Vouchers	2

Figure 7 Inclusion in Action at Partner Level

The majority of the 19 partners that completed the survey support, employ and have volunteers that are PWD, older persons, and/or refugees, as outlined above. These organisations support PWD in a range of ways; through inclusive education, research, skill development, shelter and housing, food, emergency support, and advocacy and older persons through food distribution, housing and pastoral visits.

13 organisations agree that the inclusion of PWD and older persons in the volunteering sector remains too low; those that disagree hold that PWD and older persons are only excluded by the lack of facilities to accommodate them.

Figure 8 Partners' exposure to Online Volunteering
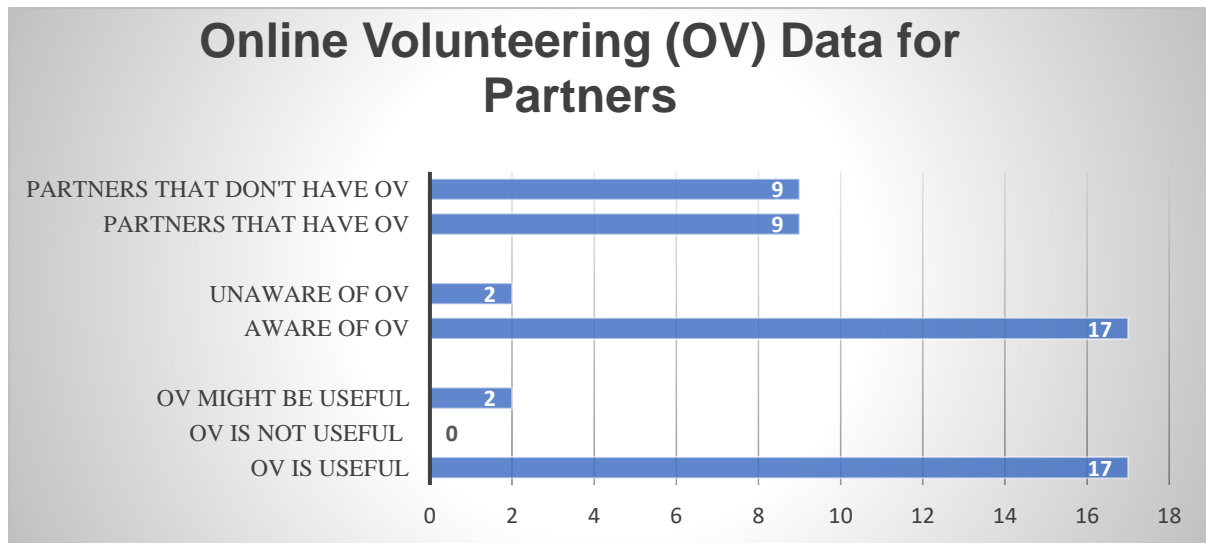
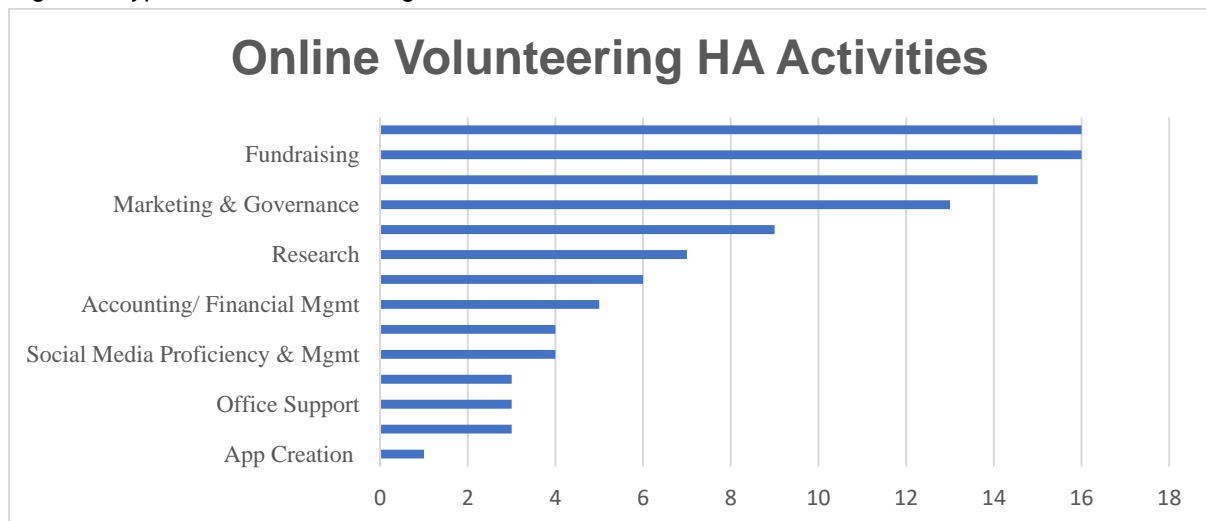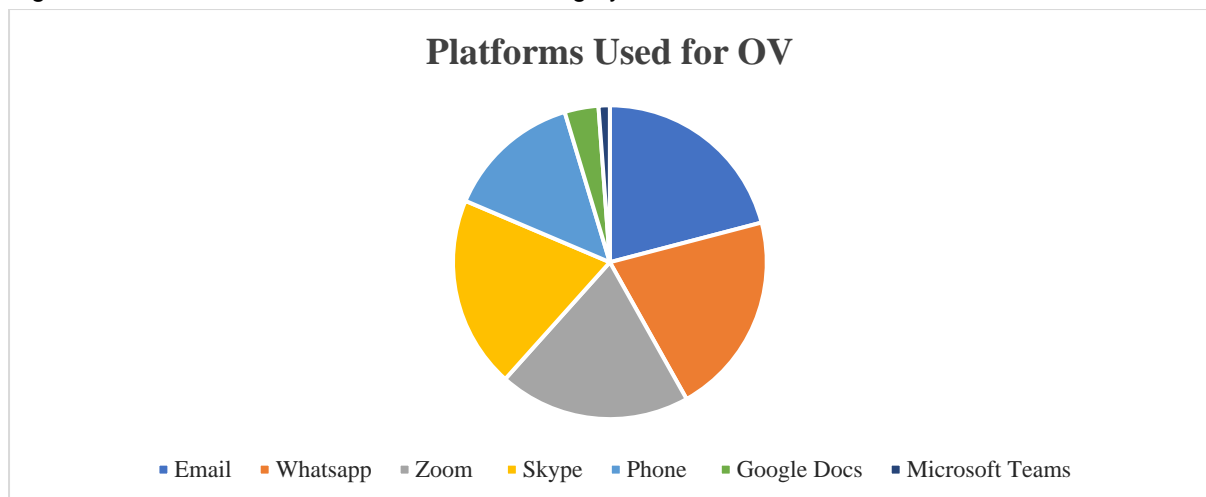Figure 9 Type Online Volunteering Activities

Figure 10 Platforms used for Online Volunteering by Partners

MOTIVATIONS

All partners indicated that OV would be useful for their organisation, with results showing that the largest motivation to avail of OV opportunities by organisations is to build the skills available, followed by building staff capacity, learning new ways of doing things, benefiting from the experience of older persons and the understanding of PWD of issues the organisation is dealing with. Other motivations include the access OV provides to short-term agile and flexible support, and the timely and cost-effective nature of OV, however others indicated that a lack of time was a challenge to OV.

Figure 11 Partners' Motivations to use Online Volunteering


CHALLENGES

Despite all partners acknowledging the usefulness of OV, most partners indicated that there are challenges and barriers to the use of OV in their context, also demonstrated by the lack of organisations currently availing of OV. The most common challenge and barrier to implementing OV for partners is the lack of facilities and technology and the costs associated with OV, despite some organisations indicating that OV was cost-effective.

The lack of technology, internet and unreliable power systems in developing countries poses a large practical challenge to the implementation of as well as a lack of know-how with technology and internet, language barriers, a lack of clear goals and objectives, and poor organisational or communication systems. Similarly, the largest barrier to the inclusion of PWD and older persons in volunteering is the lack of facilities to support and accommodate for them. Other challenges include a lack of time, or time differences between the organisation, the people they support and online volunteers and a lack of support among the organisation.

While the lack of face-to-face contact posed a large challenge to individual volunteers, only a small number of partners indicated that depersonalised relationships would be a challenge to OV. One organisation noted not working face-to-face poses "a challenge of misunderstanding things developing into conflicts". Overall however, despite these challenges, most organisations indicated that they would recommend OV to other organisations in their context.

Figure 12 Challenges for Partners to use Online Volunteering
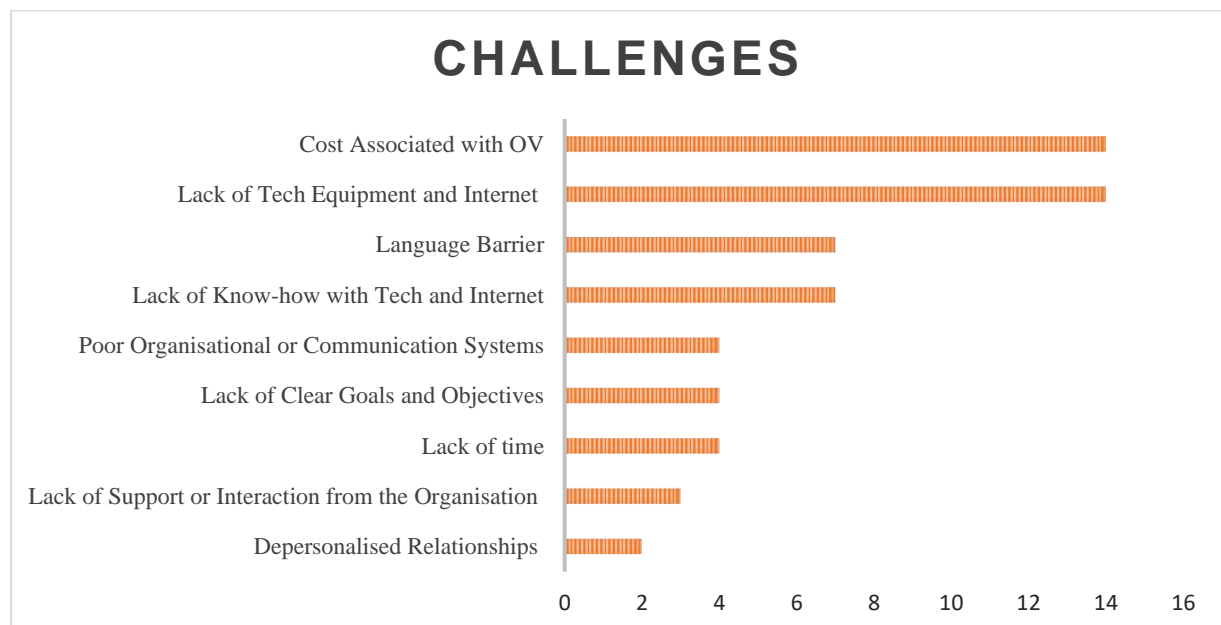
# IMPACT OF ONLINE VOLUNTEERING ON INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Figure 13 Perceptions of impact of OV on People with Disabilities
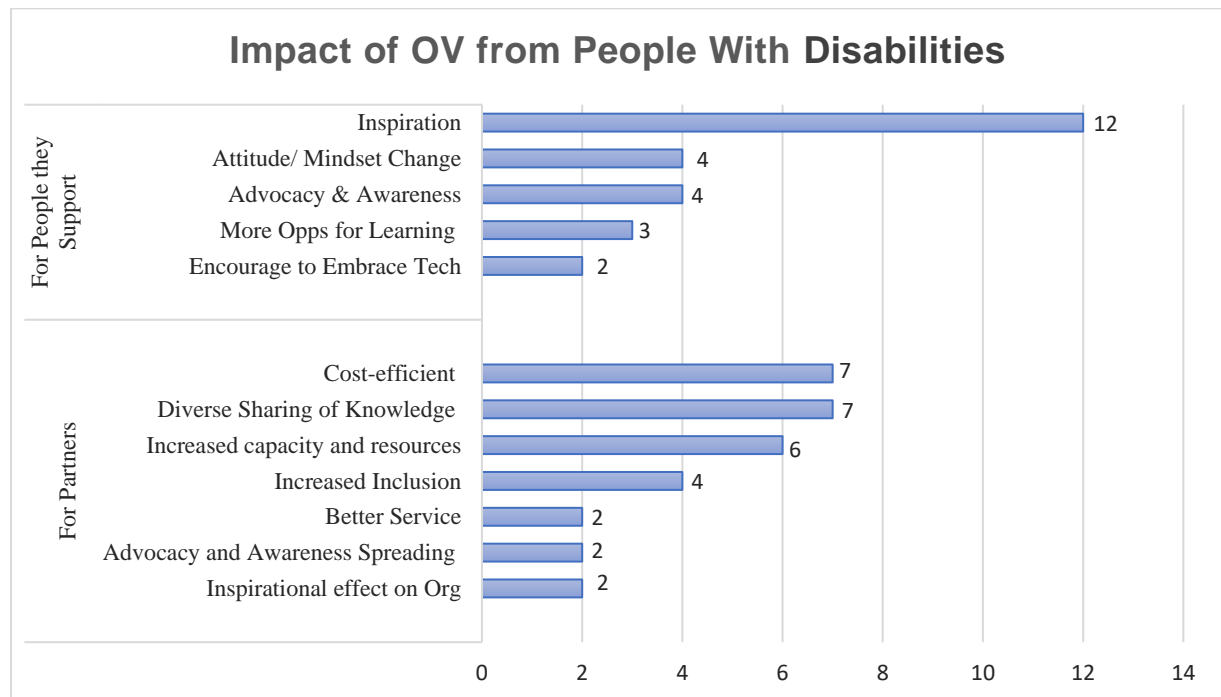
All partners indicated that OV can have a positive impact on disability inclusive development, as it provides opportunities for the inclusion of all. Most organisations felt the biggest impact of OV for the organisation would be a more inclusive service, providing PWD with more opportunities and forging positive attitudinal change towards PWD.

Another impact for the organisation is increased and more diverse experience and knowledge sharing between people from different cultures. For the people they support, organisations indicated that the inclusion of PWD would have a large inspirational effect, demonstrating that you can overcome challenges when supported properly, inspiring a positive attitudinal change towards PWD, seeing them as competent and able.

Figure 14 Barriers to Online Volunteering

Are There Barriers to OV in Your Context?

No 11%

Maybe 5%

Yes 84%
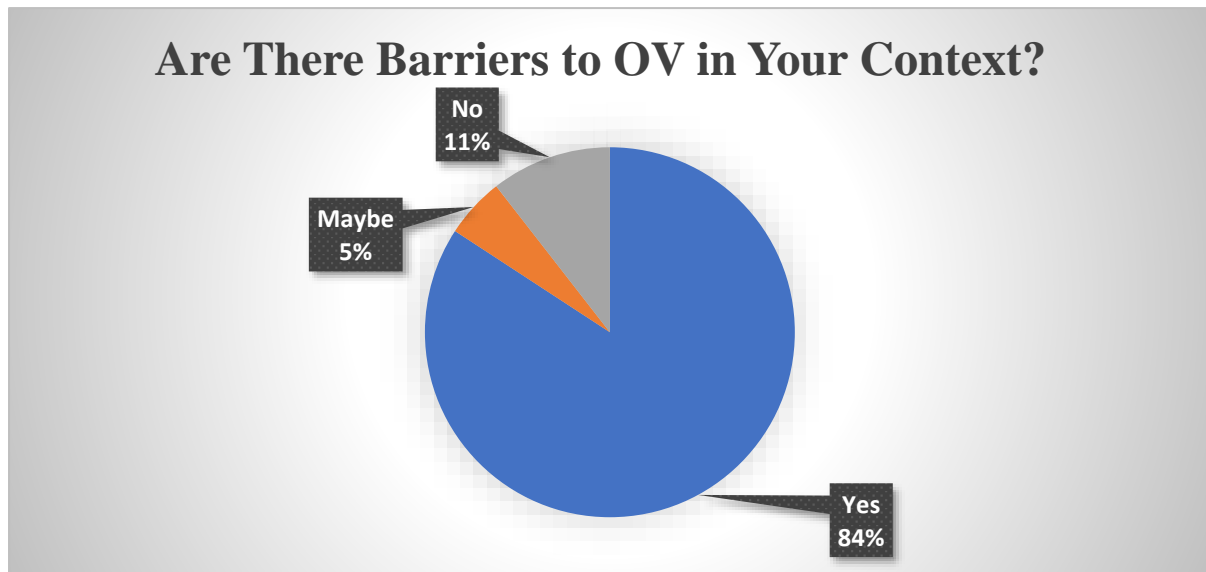
Despite the large potential for OV to provide disability inclusive development, most organisations indicated that they do not currently have the facilities to support and accommodate for them, thus limiting the extent to which PWD can be included in the effort. This indicates that most organisations would need funding to cover to large costs in setting up technology, internet and power systems needed to accommodate for PWD. Additionally, partners indicated the need to match skills, experience and education with the need in the field.

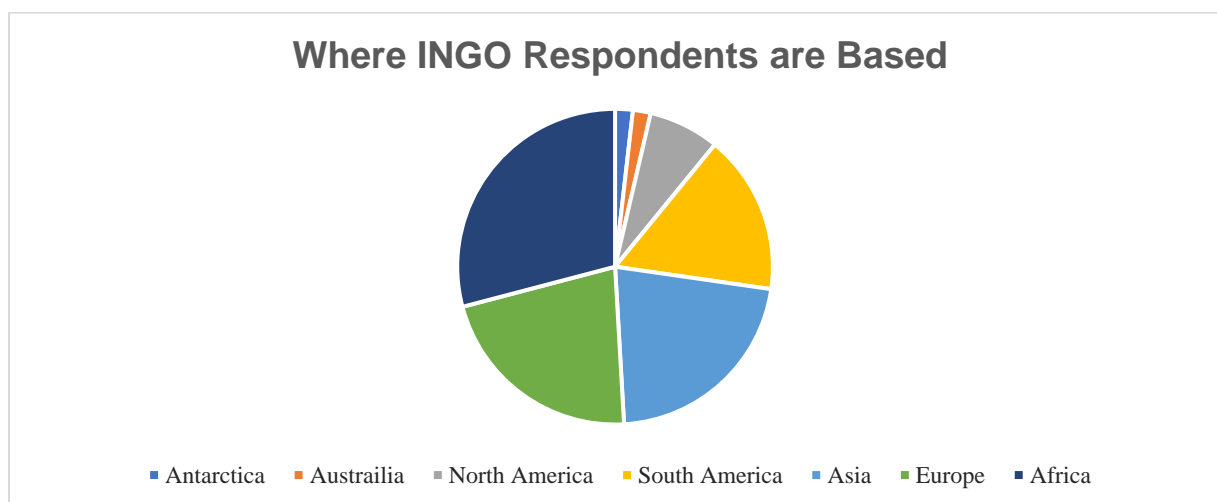## INGO / VSA RESPONSES

Figure 15 Location of Head Office

Where INGO Respondents are Based
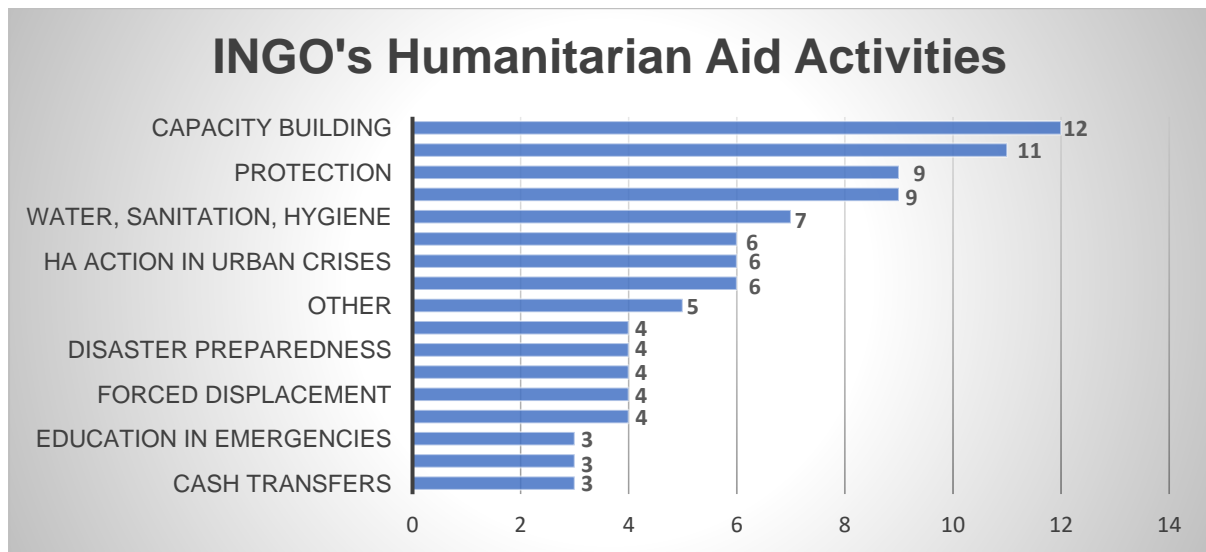
■ Antarctica ■ Austrailia ■ North America ■ South America ■ Asia ■ Europe ■ Africa

Figure 16 Humanitarian Aid Activities

INGO's Humanitarian Aid Activities

Activity	Value
CAPACITY BUILDING	12
	11
PROTECTION	9
	9
WATER, SANITATION, HYGIENE	7
	6
HA ACTION IN URBAN CRISES	6
	6
OTHER	5
	4
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS	4
	4
FORCED DISPLACEMENT	4
	4
EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES	3
	3
CASH TRANSFERS	3

Figure 17 Inclusion in Action at INGO / VSA level

INGOs Support/ Employ

EMPLOY
- MIGRANTS: 4
- OLDER PERSONS: 4
- PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: 5

SUPPORT
- MIGRANTS: 7
- OLDER PERSONS: 5
- PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: 10
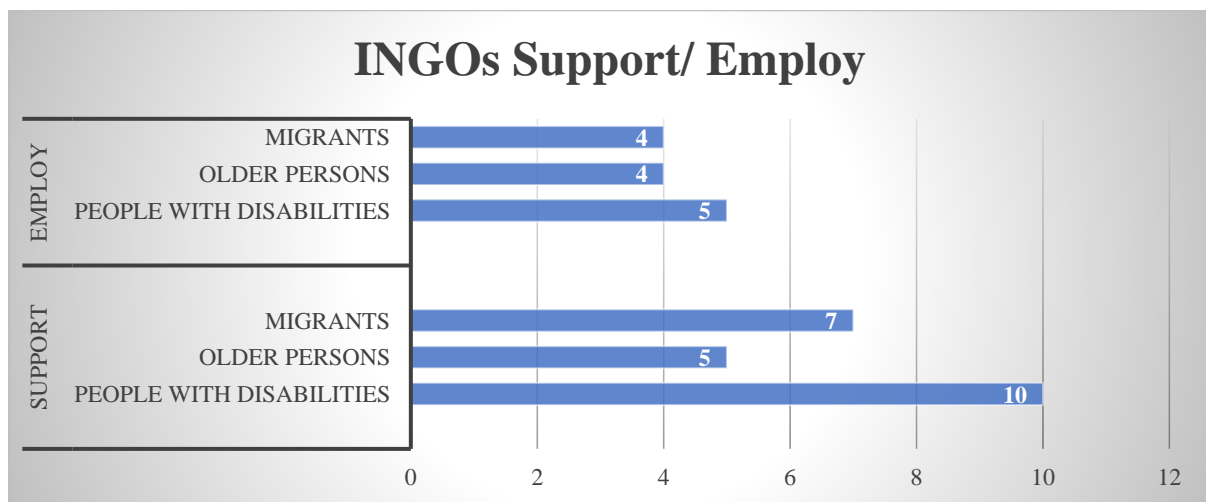
Figure 18 INGO / VSA Exposure to Online Volunteering

Online Volunteering (OV) Data

VOLUNTEERING OPPS		OV OPPORTUNITIES		FAMILIARITY WITH OV		USEFULNESS OF OV		OV CAN OVERCOME BARRIERS TO DISABILITY INCLUSION		
OFFERS VOLUNTEER ROLES	DOES NOT OFFER VOLUNTE	DOES OV	DOES NOT DO OV	FAMILIAR WITH OV	NOT FAMILIAR WITH OV	USEFUL	NOT USEFUL	YES	NO	MAYBE
13	6	6	7	3	8	7	1	8	0	2
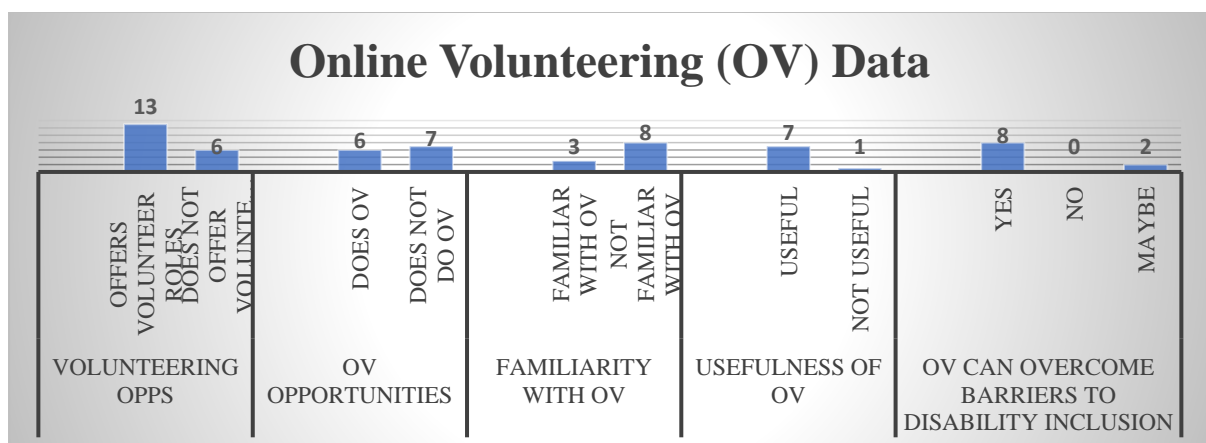
As outlined above, only six of the 13 INGOs that have volunteering roles currently have OV opportunities, while eight are not familiar with OV. Interestingly, while only seven INGOs indicated that OV would be useful in their context, when asked if OV can overcome barriers to disability inclusion, eight indicated yes and two indicated no. It is important to note that some INGOs left some questions unanswered.
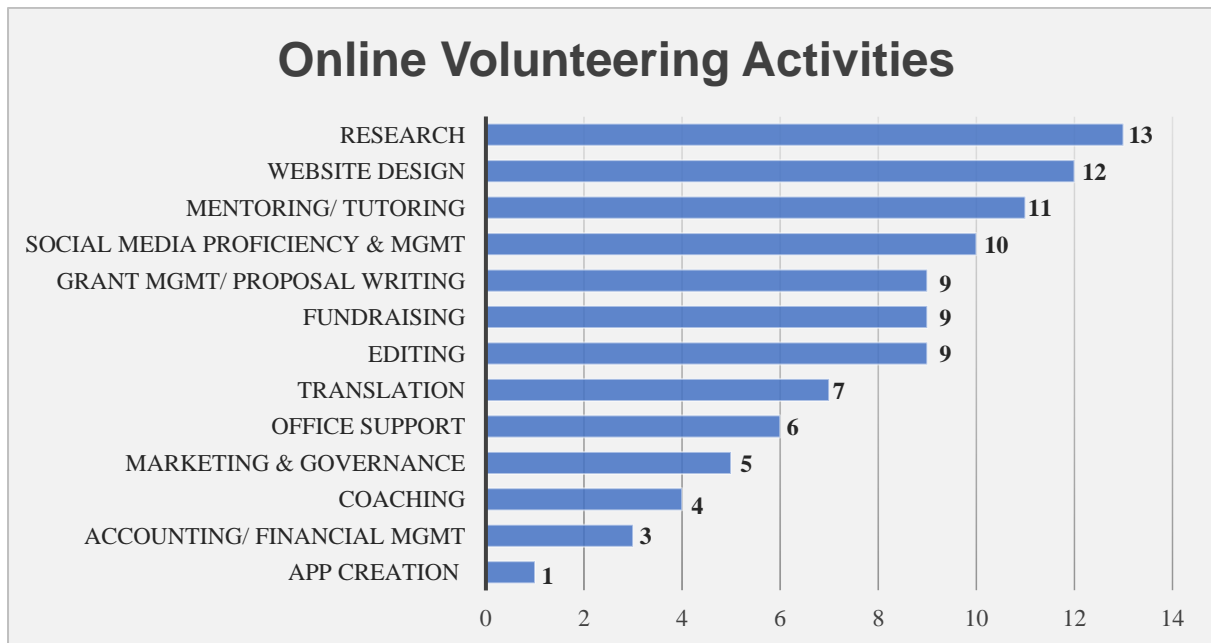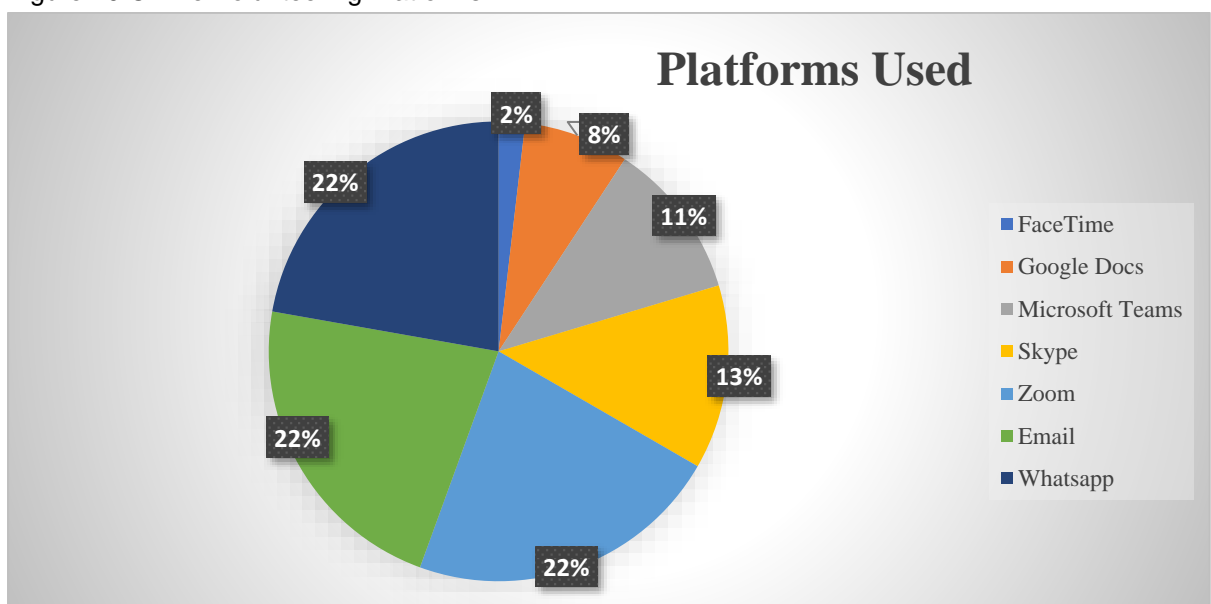
Figure 19 Online Volunteering Activities

Figure 20 Online Volunteering Platforms

MOTIVATIONS

As outlined below, the most common motivation for using online volunteers is building the capacity of their staff, followed by having a wider range of skills available for them, learning new ways of doing things, having short term agile and flexible support, and having so much to do and not enough resources. Other motivations included the benefit of older persons experiences, and that persons with a disability can understand some of the issues that the INGOs are dealing with. One respondent said they are motivated to have OVs only because of Covid-19 pandemic, and another said they would like to have OVs from other regions.

Figure 21 INGO / VSA Motivations for using Online Volunteering
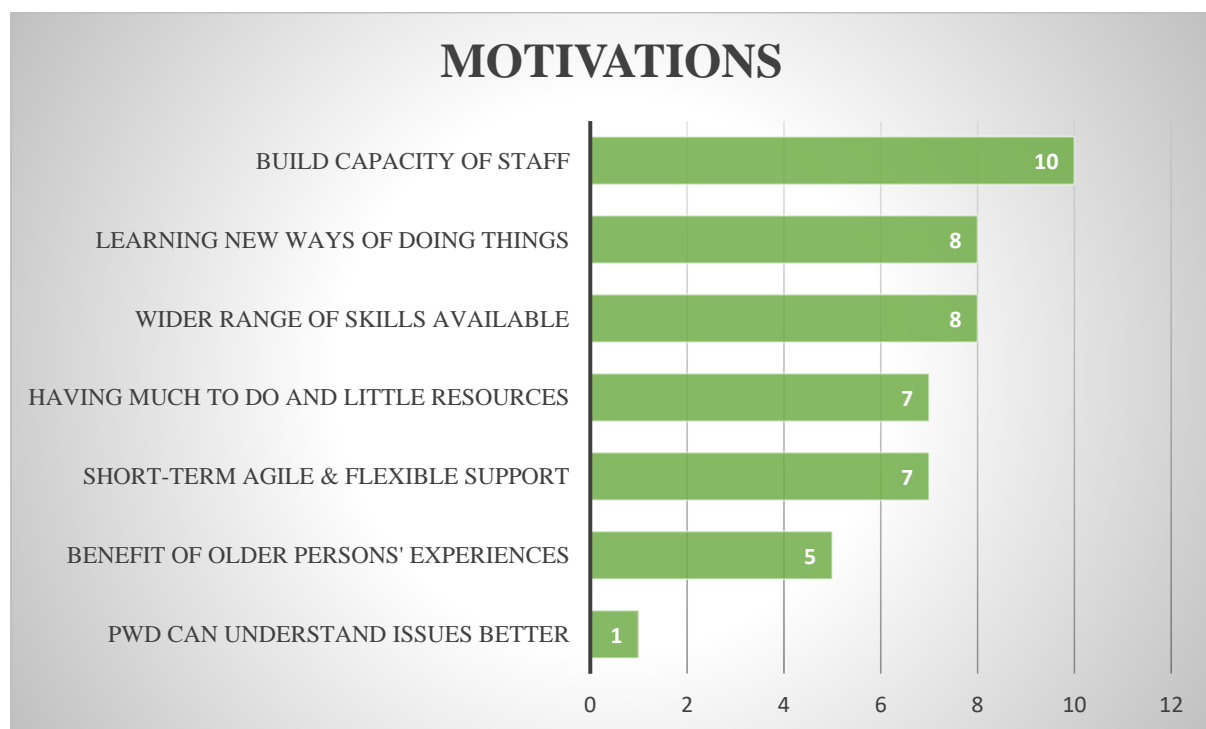
CHALLENGES

As outlined below, a major challenge highlighted by INGOs are lack of technological equipment and poor internet, a lack of clear goals and objectives, lack of time (mainly due to time differences), depersonalized relationships due to the tools used, and poor organisational or communication systems and language barriers. Costs associated with OV (internet, technology) are concerns of only one INGO.

Figure 22 Challenges for Online Volunteering

IMPACT OF ONLINE VOLUNTEERING

11 INGOs responded to this question, with most of them mentioning different positive impacts of engaging PWDs in OV; for themselves, the organisation, and for the people who receive the services.

For PWDs, OV would empower PWDs, giving them the opportunity to feel useful and bring their contribution as much as any other "typical" volunteer. OV provides opportunities for PWDs to engage in humanitarian action. With the relative accessibility of online platforms, it facilities effective engagement in volunteering for HA.

For the organisation, OV from PWDs would support and strengthen advocacy and awareness for an organisation working with PWDs. OV may be especially impactful for disability-specific projects to see what is possible in terms of inclusive and meaningful employment or volunteering. OV would allow the organisation to include a range of people that may not typically volunteer, possibly due to difficulties in mobility, or people from the GS, as they could work from their homes. The inclusion of PWDs in OV may also offer a perspective on behalf of any people the INGO support who have a disability; a perspective that the organisation would otherwise not have.

Other positive impacts of having OV from PWD mentioned include skill transfer for the host organisations if needs are matched with available skills, as well as a wider range of perspectives into the thinking and decision making of the receiving INGO.

For the people the organisation supports, OV work from PWD may enhance the service they received, offering a new perspective and better understanding.

Contrastingly, one respondent responded that it is hard to say whether OV from PWD would have an impact, while another said no difference as with people without disability.

OPPORTUNITIES

INGOs need awareness about the capabilities of PWDs: many people are hesitant since they may not have exposure or experience with one. Respondents left some questions related to this unanswered, and they gave positive answers for differently asked questions someplace else. The same for OV - many INGOs changed their answers from No to Yes after reading definition of

DISCUSSION

Volunteerism has traditionally represented a way of affirming individual rights and responsibilities.[30] Researchers indicated that volunteers benefit psychosocially in such ways as increased self-esteem[31], attitudinal changes,[32] improved self-concept.[33] While noting that in-country volunteering has been relatively exclusive, the literature and our research participants (quantitative and qualitative) affirm the positive opportunities to involve a broad range of society in OV, including older persons, PWDs and others.

The world is becoming smaller and OV, through its potential for numerous linkages on an individual basis as well as institutional ones, can help people understand each other better was the conclusion of most conversations. Quantitative surveys underscore the value of OV and people's positive attitudes and motivations towards its adoption. Certainly, there was a feeling that this is a good time to focus on OV as a means to supporting HA efforts

"Post Covid the world is going to be a bit different and fragile for a while and this is a real opportunity to look at and develop online volunteering."
C8

Is online volunteering sustainable?

Overall, the results and responses from all survey groups and their different perspectives indicate that OV is sustainable. The majority of online respondents are motivated to carry out OV. Additionally, it appears to be a good, innovative way of connecting volunteers, organisations and programme recipients, specifically in building the capacity of organisations and their staff. It is also considered a good method of sharing experiences and knowledge improving the services organisations are providing.

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[30] Ellis & Noyes, (1990) in Miller, K., Schleien, S., Rider, C., Hall, C., Roche, M., & Worsley, J. (2002). Inclusive volunteering: Benefits to participants and community. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 36*(3), 247-259*.*
[31] Johnson, Beebe, Mortimar, & Snyder, 1998; Omoto & Snyder, 1990; Primavera, 1999 in Ibid
[32] Moore & Allen, 1996; Hamilton & Fennel, 1988 in Ibid
[33] Omoto, Snyder, & Berghuis, 1992; Moore & Allen in Ibid

Overcoming typical barriers to volunteering is a positive feature of OV, particularly for those with disabilities, OPs and other MVs. The research finds also, that inclusion and diversity brings fresh perspective and adds value. Practically, OV also can facilitate an outpouring of capacity building that can go far in terms of sustaining impact and positive change in the GS. Additionally, whilst multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination exacerbate the situation of PWDs in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies,[34] OV, through inclusive development can impact positively to change this situation.

Certainly, the organisation with the biggest track in OV to date, the UN, finds it to be a sustainable response to a range of needs in the HA context.

"We believe that volunteerism and volunteers represent the first and the last mile of connectivity. In particular, online volunteerism creates new opportunities for people who have too often been excluded from participation – such as older volunteers, people with disabilities, individuals living in remote areas, and those with pressing domestic responsibilities or very limited means."[35]

Can inclusion increase European INGOs capacity to manage and oversee inclusive Humanitarian Aid Projects?

Up to now, volunteer coordinators seem to have not considered partnering with groups described here as MVs. There are many theories about why this is the case: they do not know how to approach them; do not know what should be taken into consideration; do not have the time or funding to organise adequately. Additionally, people from these groups are not engaging with HA volunteering perhaps because they perceive it not to be a place they can add value, or how to even go about getting involved. Similarly, in the GS partners do not seem to expect representation of PWDs, OPs and people from their countries who have since left, to support their HA efforts.

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[34] https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf
[35] De Raad (2003), Executive Coordinator for The United Nations Volunteers at the time: http://www.unv.org/infobase/speeches/2003/adr_wsis.htm

This research finds that OV can become a value addition to European INGOs and VSAs in helping manage and oversee HA projects. This is not without its challenges, but such challenges are not an enough to stop European PWDs and other groups from accessing their right to live full lives, including their right to participate in HA. Nor do they justify the inequality among PWDs, OPs and other groups suffering in the GS."[36]

In the end, OV can facilitate the inclusion of perspectives and rights of PWDs in all HA activities, while at the same time empowering PWDs in disability specific projects. OV appears to provide a good chance of a changing tide in terms of a better quality of life for all.

Does online volunteering offer Humanitarian Aid a unique perspective?

This exploratory research finds that PWDs OPs and other groups can offer a unique perspective in understanding certain practical issues as well as the feeling of being marginalised, facing and overcoming challenges etc. This research complemented by the literature review draws on the leadership, skills, experience and expertise of PWDs and their active participation HA as an essential prerequisite to successfully reshape HA and emergency response.[37]

"If PWDs are volunteering, programmes will be different."
C6

A group who we do not see much of in terms of international volunteering are persons who have settled in Europe having been born in countries in the GS. However, all interviewees felt that there was a huge opportunity, for this group to not only be involved in OV but also in aiding its successful widespread implementation given their contextual knowledge of both the GS and the GN.

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[36] Balandin et al. 2006b in Alternative spaces of 'work' and inclusion for disabled people: Edward Hall & Robert Wilton (2011)
[37] https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/backgrounder_article_11.pdf

What does the future of online volunteering look like?

In October 2020, the typical humanitarian, European and digital contexts are all rapidly evolving. In both the GS and GN different villages, towns, countries, regions and continents are experiencing the negative effects of COVID19 in different ways.

This research primarily looked at what could be called 'traditional' online aspects of volunteering, i.e. using volunteers to support HA by passing on skills and support using online platforms such as zoom and skype etc. on a phone or computer / lap-top. Successful HA type OV results from at least one volunteering-involving a INGO / VSA organisation staff member being responsible for and co-ordinating the involvement of online volunteers, being comfortable with working online, having basic experience in volunteer management.[38] To date, successful online volunteers tend to have good literacy, are comfort with certain levels of bureaucracy and protocol, an openness to diversity of views and working styles and have a broad understanding of community.[39] The changing, innovative world of digitalisation however, offers many additional opportunities and challenges for online volunteerism in HA.

Digitalisation, while facilitating much of the immediate needs of OV in HA, is itself so fast moving as to be almost impossible in an exploratory research piece, to predict what it will look like tomorrow. And, whilst COVID 19 has catapulted online HA volunteering and capacity building / support, we do not know what the results and impact of this situation will be long term. What OV looks like in the future is therefore beyond the scope of this exploratory piece of research.

How can online volunteering engage 'MV'S?

In the event that OV gains in popularity, challenges around recruiting, training and managing were emphasised. OV has the potential to attract a lot more volunteers than in-country volunteering programmes as well as a wide diversity of nationalities and capacities. OV should be reflective of current in-country volunteering and

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[38] Cravens, J. (2006). Involving international online volunteers: Factors for Success, Organizational benefits and new views Of community. The International Journal of Volunteer Administration, XXIV(1), 15–23.
[39] Ibid

programme related support as much as possible as stated earlier. Thus, structured and meaningful training and some noted this could be a problem. VSAs and INGOs highlighted that ongoing volunteer management could also be challenging.

In contrast to the literature, this research finds the lack of face to face communication and contact, and depersonalised relationships is not a challenge for European NGOs, partners or volunteers who had volunteered online. Conversely, for those who have not participated in OV, the perception is that trust and effective relationships might be difficult and is a reason for not partaking in OV. However, UN volunteering evaluations note its positive impact and many volunteers who have volunteered online note the ability to build good relationships online. Engaging with OVs may not be as impersonal as it might seem. However, supporting strong trusting relationships, and we have not spoken about the how of this in terms of accessibility yet, may take a lot longer than in-country personal engagement.

Mentoring as a tool to support problems around volunteer management, training, issues of cultural awareness and so on an important is an interesting concept. There are many people living in Europe who know well the contexts in which INGOs and VSAs will deploy OV. These may well be ex volunteers, development workers and others, but the biggest group consists of persons who have re-settled in Europe from the GS. Working with people from these communities to act as mentors to online volunteers may prove an effective solution to linking GS and the GN online volunteerism.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

Two key areas for OV's value addition were the localisation agenda and disability inclusive development. These are also aligned with the EU's humanitarian principles and with EUAVI and VIVID's aims.

THE LOCALISATION AGENDA

Localisation is a "transformational process to recognise, respect, and invest in local and national humanitarian and leadership capacities, to better meet the needs of

crisis-affected communities."[40] Localisation includes the capacities and power of the HA context.

Figure 23 The Seven Dimensions of Localisation [41]
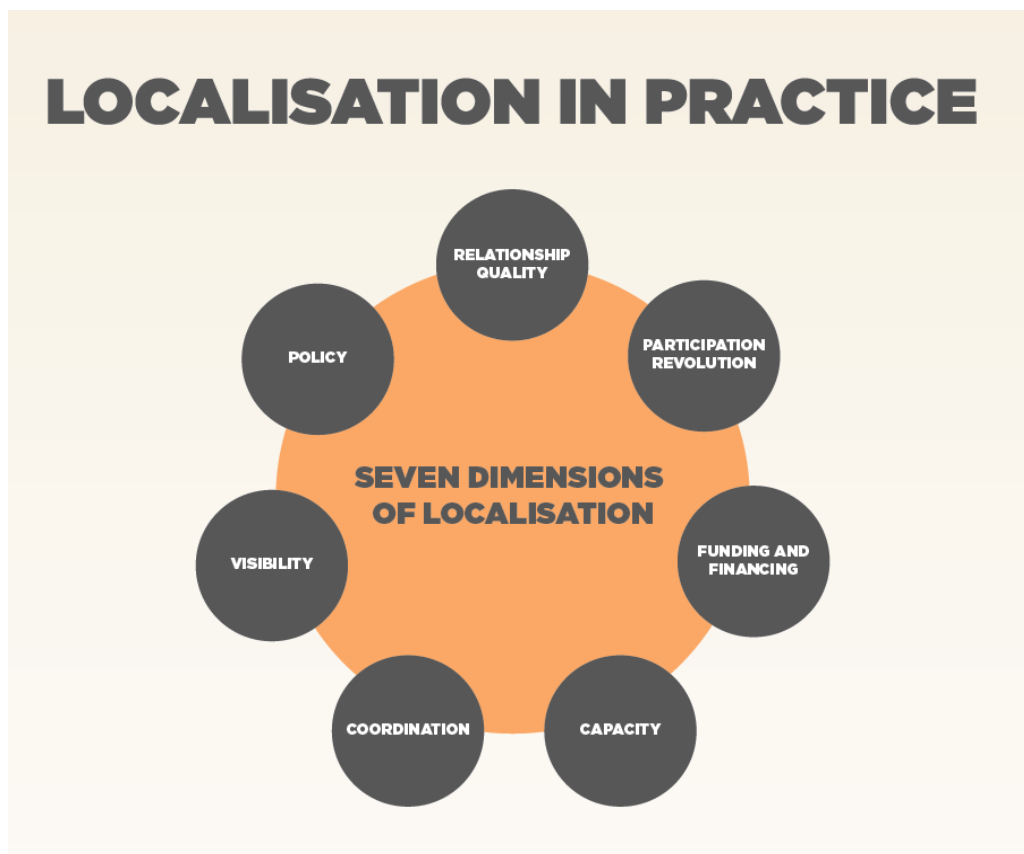
The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) brought significant attention to 'localisation'. The Grand Bargain later confirmed commitment from the largest humanitarian donors and aid organisations to ensure national and local partners are involved in decision-making processes in any humanitarian response, and deliver assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles. Workstream 2 of the Grand Bargain is about localisation[42].

Up to now INGOs and VSAs have dominated the HA sector building a presence during emergencies and often staying on to continue post crises development work. Funds are channelled from donors through GN INGO head offices primarily. Localisation, is about decentralising power, money and resources in humanitarian

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[40] Oxfam's definition cited in Money Talk: Parrish, Ch. & A. Kattakuzhy (2018)
[41] Disaster Emergencies Preparedness Programme: Global Mentoring Initiative (2018)
[42] http://media.ifrc.org/grand_bargain_localisation/

and development aid. It's about local actors influencing action and making decisions throughout – with international actors (including INGOs) stepping in only if and when necessary.

There is a strong argument that OV can go a long way to supporting this workstream. Local DPOs, NGOS, CBOs, religious and community leaders and others, usually have better access to places, information and knowledge of local cultures, sensitivities, practices, priorities and needs. Development partners located in the GS, particularly those in hard to reach and rural locations are often more capable than international actors in understanding the issues, ability to move fast and maximising efficiency. By supporting capacity building and access to funds

Online volunteers can help to support an enabling environment for localisation which in turn means that money and resources could become more cost effective and less money would not need to be spent on 'setting up' or / and higher wages and stipends.

The localisations agenda calls for local and national humanitarian actors to have greater presence, influence and leadership in humanitarian coordination mechanisms. OVs potential to support advocacy and help link voices and action to the national and global stage as well as drive best practice as well as convention and policy implementation make it a force for change in humanitarian responses.

At the heart of the localisation process is a transference of power, meaning to the communities themselves, including grassroots development partners and the crisis-affected people. OV can support this shift in power to enable local actors to lead processes and decision-making, and eventually receive greater sums of direct funding. It may even be used to innovate the approach to include the person who has resettled in the GN who may either volunteer and or act as a mentor. Such an advance supports the inclusion of 'local' voices from both directions in the localisation process.

"Online volunteering can help engage experts from the south"
C9

DISABILITY INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

It is important to highlight that people with disabilities are not a homogeneous group. However, for the purposes of this exploratory research it is used as the dominant term to describe as a group people with a wide variety of physical, mental and intellectual impairments. For HA, the inclusion of European PWDs working to support the GS is an under-prioritised area. Volunteering for HA also reflects this under representation. On the other hand, during crises and after, PWDs suffer higher mortality rates; there is increased disability from injury caused by disasters and increased incidences of chronic illness, malnutrition and negative psychological impacts.[43]

A disability-inclusive approach to development seeks to include people with disability in the development process by recognising their potential, valuing and respecting their contributions and perspectives, honouring their dignity, and effectively responding to their needs".[44]

Generally speaking, within the HA context, there appears to be an assumption that PWDs and OPs are only in need of services. This research highlights the need for HA to be more inclusive of PWDs, who to date, have not been given opportunities to reap the substantial benefits associated with being givers of services, particularly as international volunteers. It also discusses that PWDs and others who have up to now been mostly passive receivers of HA, can become the dominant voices in their own care and futures.

OV is positioned to provide greater opportunities to achieve self-realisation, for PWDs, OPs and others. It us especially suited to those who are challenged to participate in offline volunteering due to disability, age, financial or / and domestic obligations that prevent them from travelling or living overseas.[45] With the appropriate approach, design and inputs, OV can facilitate volunteering by a wide range of groups within the PWD cohort which can then create an avenue and

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[43] Robinson. A, Marella. M, Logam. L (2020) Gap Analysis: the Inclusion of People with Disabilities and Older People in Humanitarian Response
[44] AusAID (2008:7) Development for All: Towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009-2014
[45] Camichai-Hamburger, 2008; Cravens 2000, UNV 2015.

capacity for the dominant discourse of disabled people as 'passive recipients of care, rather than active contributors to society to be challenged and changed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research explores and reports on perceptions, opportunities and challenges of OV for HA and finds that all research participants perceive OV to be a good idea. It provide additional and impactful opportunities to support European Union humanitarian responses, with particular attention to the most vulnerable victims, namely persons with disabilities and old age.

There is unanimous agreement by all that these same groups are marginalised in terms of discrimination and a lower quality of life in Europe. OV would provide opportunities to shift this marginalisation and allow people traditionally excluded from participation in HA to play an important and effective role in the future. It also finds that PWDs, OPs, persons who have settled in Europe from the GS, and other groups such as long term unemployed, traditionally excluded from volunteering for HA, offer valuable and often unique perspectives that can improve the EU's humanitarian responses.

Motivation to support OV for HA is strong across all HA volunteering stakeholder groups. Issues around the need for investment in technology, challenges around recruitment, training, volunteer management, disability related assistive technology were all key issues raised. That OV efforts should continue to ensure 'no-one is left behind' was a key theme that was emphasised by all qualitative research participants and was found to be a key consideration by quantitative research respondents.

Research participants find that these challenges, whilst not insignificant, can be addressed successfully with the appropriate planning, resource (human and financial) investment, programme design and monitoring and evaluation.

LAST WORDS

"Good to have both (traditional in country volunteers and online volunteers) complementing each other and not relying on one form of volunteering."
C1

"Online volunteering would probably be most impactful in conjunction with traditional face to face volunteering – how this would work out practically, is another story!"
C3

"The uptake may not be as fast as we would like and it may take longer before it bears fruit."
C10

"If we have more volunteers they can build the capacity of organisations from so many different angles."
C4

"Online volunteering would really have to add value because of the costs and barriers – so adding to the partners' work rather than taking from their work – taking up time etc."
C11

"I am excited for the opportunity that online volunteering gives to engage with different cultures in Ireland as part of the orientation and even the cultural mentoring – that will value the new cultures that we have here."
C8

RECOMMENDATIONS

OV needs to be sensitive to the issues of unequal access to technology while adapting its use to local needs, cultural contexts and technology infrastructure. A technology needs assessment / gap audit with all stakeholders wishing to avail of OV for HA will be required.

Donors will need expert, highly committed champions committed to OV so that realistic supports and expectations can be put in place. Supporting those organisations who wish to deploy online volunteers will be an important aspect for donors to consider. OV will require initial investment that may take some time to reap the rewards currently expected of donor programmes.

A strong understanding of the parameters of what EUAVI consider to be OV is required. Does it simply provide capacity building support to development partners using a structured system of programme management using some face to face supportive technology? Does it include or exclude more innovative online volunteer options such as Clicktivism - the use of social media and other online methods to promote a cause; Volunteer voices: Volunteers working online use geospatial mapping for emergency response efforts; the Digital Humanitarian Network; the International Network of Crisis Mappers)[46] and others.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms and frameworks may need to be re-evaluated and redesigned / adapted to support OV and its unique approach to HA.

Enough time and effort will need to be built into all OV programmes to ensure
- OV is driven by the needs and capacity of those receiving it.
- A strategic focus on supply and demand: the increasing trend to professionalise the volunteering sector causes a certain mismatch between the needs of volunteering organisations and the aspirations of new online volunteers.

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[46] Blythe McLennan, Joshua Whittaker and John Handmer (2015) Report No. 2015.065. Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC Emergency Volunteering in Australia: Transforming not Declining Centre for Risk and Community Safety, RMIT University

- Adequate training of both online volunteers and those individuals and organisations receiving their support including an understanding of specific IASC guidelines and the human rights framework.
- Clearly defined objectives, clear and regular communications with volunteers, and a result monitoring process.
- Relationship building is facilitated and supported between the volunteer and the person s/he is collaborating with.
- Some type of due diligence is required around whether governments will accept OV as a means of HA.
- An OV charter providing clear guidance for online volunteers and their counterparts
- A strategy is developed to promote OV as a concept as well as the individual activities involved.

A collaborative approach that includes further research and outreach to other:

- EU volunteering programmes such as the European Solidarity Corps a volunteer programme for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe[47] and EU Aid Volunteers a broad based programme that supports HA and projects run by partners of EU-based organisations
- volunteer organisations and bodies in each of the national contexts of EUAVI consortium members e.g. in the Irish context, the organisation Comhlámh, along with other volunteering organisations in Europe, are working an Erasmus + project exploring how organisations support international volunteers in long term active citizenship.

The CRPD defines that "Universal Design shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed."[48] A better understand of the assistive needs of PWD volunteers and others will form a key part of inclusive OV.

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[47] https://www.volunteer.ie/resources/links/esc/
[48] Amplifying our Voices: Our Lives, Our Say, World Blind union (2020)

Similarly, it would be useful to gain familiarity with G3ict – the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies and the CBM Digital Accessibility Toolkit.

In solidarity with the PWD community, it is recommended that EUAVI Consortium Members and stakeholders, join the International Disability Alliance and International Disability and Development Accessibility Campaign – COVID19 calling for public health information and communications around COVID19 to be fully accessible [49]

There are many groups that have been excluded from volunteering opportunities, who deserve adequate attention e.g. the long term unemployed; older persons; persons who cannot afford to take the time off usually needed for in country volunteering etc. It is important not to only focus on disability which judging from the qualitative research conversations is a possible danger.

Finally, whilst these recommendations are of value at this stage, ultimately, a deeper and wider research into all aspects of the excluded volunteer is required to complement this rapid exploratory research.

[49] Ibid