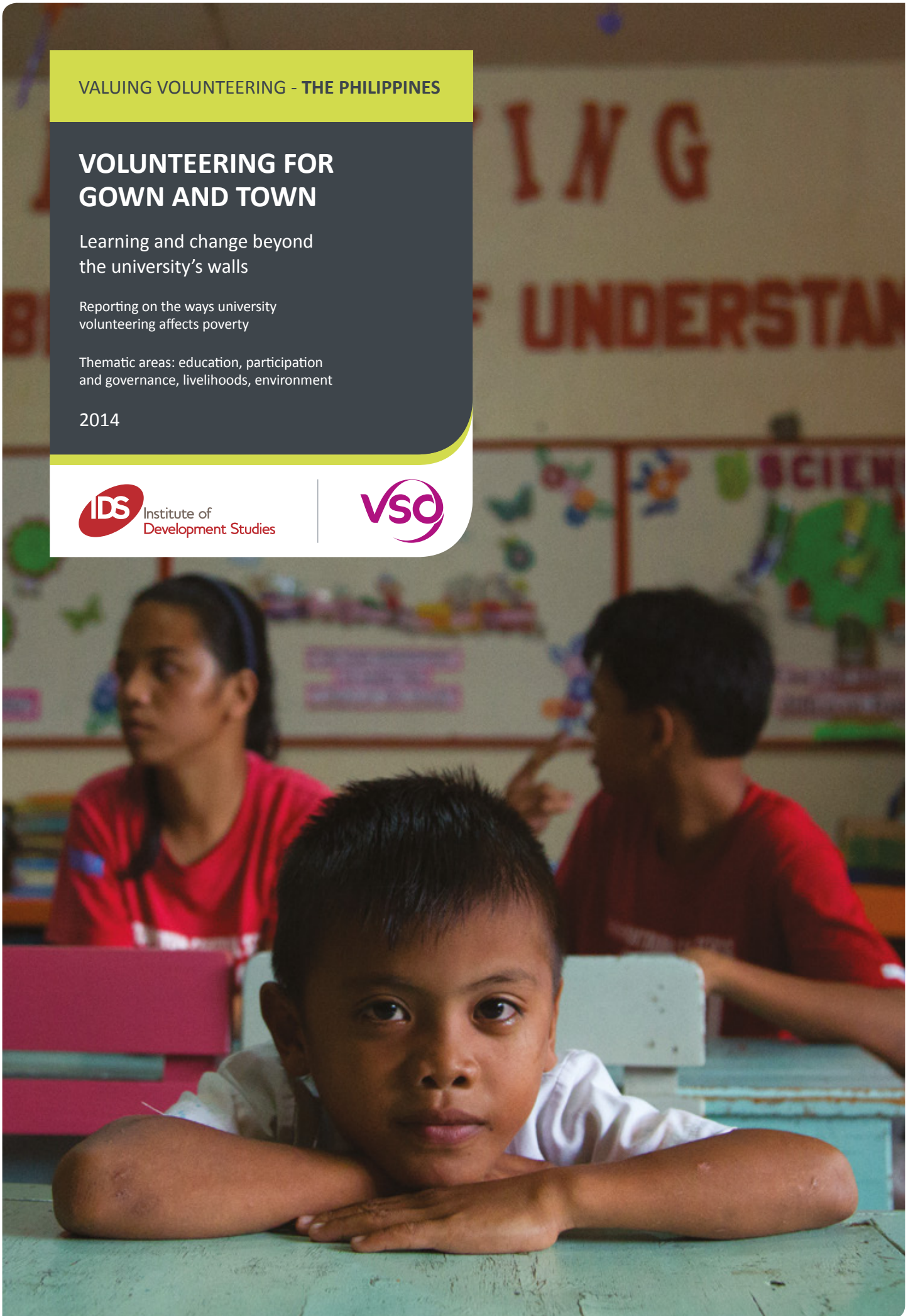# VOLUNTEERING FOR GOWN AND TOWN

Learning and change beyond the university's walls

Reporting on the ways university volunteering affects poverty

Thematic areas: education, participation and governance, livelihoods, environment

2014

IDS Institute of Development Studies

VSO

VSO at a glance

VSO is the world's leading independent international development organisation that works through volunteers to fight poverty in developing countries.

VSO brings people together to share skills, build capabilities and promote international understanding and action. We work with partner organisations at every level of society, from government organisations at a national level to health and education facilities at a local level.

IDS

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) is a leading global organisation for international development research, teaching and communications. The *Valuing Volunteering* project is being conducted in partnership with the IDS Participation, Power and Social Change Team.

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This report was written by Jody Aked.

The post-NCEAV research team comprised:

- Jody Aked, *Valuing Volunteering* – leading on research methodology and activities and contribution to white paper and case study outputs

- Jay Neil-Ancheta, VSO Bahaginan – providing expertise on the volunteering landscape

- Malou Turalde-Jarabe, Institutional Network for Social Action (INSA), Miriam College – providing expertise about the education sector and volunteering

- Belinda Yemm, INSA, Miriam College – author of literature review and co-facilitator of research activities

- Rowena Banconguis, University of the Philippines (UP) Los Baños – lead author of the policy and research white paper

- Len Manikan, VSO Bahaginan – coordination support and author of NCEAV case studies

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Abbreviations

AC	Active citizenship
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BFAR	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
BISU	Bohol Island State University
BU	Bicol University
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DSW	Department of Social Work
GIS	Geographic information system
HEI	Higher education institution
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
INSA	Institutional Network for Social Action
JVP	Jesuit Volunteers Philippines
JVPFI	Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation, Inc.
KKP	Kristohanong Katilingban sa Pagpakabana (Christian Community for Social Awareness)
LGU	Local Government Unit
MAO	Municipal Agriculture Office
MOA	Memorandum of agreement
NCEAV	National Conference on the Engagement of Academe in Volunteering
NCPAG	National College for Public Administration and Governance
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSTP	National Service Training Programme
PNVSCA	Philippines National Volunteer Support Coordination Agency
ToC	Theory of Change
UP	University of the Philippines
XU	Xavier University

Contents

1. Executive Summary

In December 2012, The National Conference on the Engagement of the Academe in Volunteering (NCEAV) was the first time that academic institutions, civil society organisations and government agencies from the Philippines' three main island groups – Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao – came together to discuss university volunteering for development. There was an interest in understanding when and how volunteering extends beyond personal impacts to societal ones.

Contributing to the central *Valuing Volunteering* research question of 'How, where and when does volunteering affect poverty?' *Valuing Volunteering Philippines* was particularly interested in answering the following questions:

- What kind of social change does university volunteering lead to and how do these changes contribute to poverty alleviation?

- What kind of university-enabled volunteering is most effective at supporting poverty alleviation and sustainable development?

- What can be learned from this sector to inform volunteering initiatives more widely in the Philippines?

This case study pulls together the learning of six interlinked inquiries with public and private universities in the Philippines, including Ateneo University, UP Los Baños, Bicol University, Bohol Island State University, Xavier University and Miriam College. Undertaken between July 2012 and October 2013, each inquiry lasted two to four days, and involved working with volunteer support staff, university volunteers and community members to learn how change happens, and reflect on what works and doesn't work within a particular context.

Findings

In our examination of how volunteering directly affects poverty, our findings are organised into six key themes:

Improving the lives of people living in poverty. We found university volunteers can create a number of changes in communities which should help with alleviating poverty. Some of the volunteer programmes we reviewed resulted in greater self-reliance and self-direction on the part of the community, but this happened slowly and over time. It was harder to see impact from one-time activities in communities, like annual tutorials or gift-giving.

Relationships make the transfer of technical expertise more responsive to community needs. University volunteers hold a privileged position in society. They have the means to access the latest knowledge, thinking and learning facilities in ways that people living in disadvantaged communities cannot. The research indicates that effective volunteers are encouraged to intentionally build relationships. Relationships are recognised as an important part of the change process because they make it possible to gain the trust of the community. This trust gains volunteers access to contextual information that helps volunteers to tailor their support and technical input to community needs. The more immersed the volunteer is in community life, the faster this process becomes.

A unique role for universities in shaping a social context that supports pro-poor development. Alongside making tangible changes through specific volunteering activities and projects, we learned that universities can influence development that is pro-poor by acting as a bridge, linking marginalised communities to services and decision-makers, lending legitimacy to the concerns and actions of communities, and providing a steady presence that is unwavering through the journey of change. These contributions provide additional support to communities struggling to escape poverty and right social injustices. The commitment required to support this sort of social change is made possible by the nature of universities as geographically and socially established institutions which can provide stability, credibility and a steady supply of volunteers.

Features of the university system limit effectiveness of volunteer programmes. University volunteer programmes are intended as a force for poverty alleviation and national development. There is a gap, however, between this rhetoric and the design of volunteer programmes to fit features of the university system. This means programmes cannot tailor volunteer interventions to get to the root causes of issues. Communities can be left feeling like social laboratories, and saturation of volunteering activity reduces their receptiveness. The consequence is a trend of greater accountability to the volunteer and wider university institution than the community the volunteers work with.

Strategies for increasing a community focus in university volunteer programmes. It always seemed to be the case that those spearheading volunteer and extension programmes had a challenging time navigating institutional constraints to convince staff and students to engage in community work and to do so meaningfully. Universities trying to tackle this head-on emphasised social justice as a strong institutional value, as with Ateneo universities and Miriam College. Bicol University operationalised a commitment to community development in its strategic plan for 2003–13. Strategies for increasing a community focus involved hiring staff with community development expertise, collaborating with community-level partners such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and training and orientation for staff and student volunteers.

A failure to learn about what works prevents improvements and excellence in volunteer programme design. Community development work is complex and does not follow a fixed trajectory. A lot of volunteering is iterative and experimental in nature, making it a natural accompaniment to social change work. People work with their best intentions and resources to try and solve an issue or problem. They give things a go but there is little follow-up on the part of volunteers or volunteer programmes to check on the changes that have occurred in the lives of people living in poverty. Most of the universities we engaged – and which we would consider in large part to be front-runners in the sector – highlighted standardised measurement and evaluation as a challenge area in reflection sessions. Limited practice around measuring what has changed for people and communities affects how helpful university volunteering is as a tool for development.

In exploring the links between volunteering, active citizenship and poverty alleviation we look at three additional themes:

The relationship between volunteer mobilisation and active citizenship. There is a distinction between unconscious, involuntary or coerced behaviour and intentional action where the person demonstrates a control or guidance over their own behaviour. We found the relationship between mobilising people to volunteer and active citizenship is not straightforward. It is more than possible for students and faculty staff to go through the motions of community engagement activities to meet formal curriculum and institutional requirements or informal expectations of others without the accompanying spirit of volunteerism. This mindless or 'empty' volunteering is missing an emotional and intellectual connection to the change process. It can affect volunteer motivation and community willingness to persist with development concerns.

The wellbeing experienced by volunteers can affect who gets to volunteer and what kind of contribution they make. The quality of the volunteering experience affects whether volunteers sustain their efforts during and beyond a structured programme. Positive experiences are not necessarily easy experiences. It seems that immersive and long-term commitments are more demanding but also the most rewarding and life-changing, especially when supported through relationships. Negative experiences threaten volunteer wellbeing, especially when under-funded university volunteering programmes drive students into further financial hardship and exclude people from engaging.

One-way relationships slow the change process, excluding a role for community members as active citizens. The relationships volunteers foster with communities can take many forms. In one-way relationships knowledge and resources are imparted to communities instead of co-constructed. One-way giving reinforces the distinction between the 'helper' and the 'helped'. Over time this negatively affects how individuals and communities see their own roles in the change process. When this happens, volunteer initiatives may have added a human resource (in the form of the volunteer's efforts) but they have also taken a human resource away (in the form of the community's efforts). Incorporating a wider definition of 'active citizen' into volunteer programmes, which extends beyond the university volunteer, can help universities extend the impact of their work on poverty.

Revisiting the theory of change

The research did not begin with a blank canvas. Its initial inquiries were able to compile a working theory of change about how actors in the sector think university volunteering contributes to poverty alleviation and national development. We identified two main routes to impact. The first pathway represents the use of volunteer action to directly improve the lives of communities. The second pathway represents the use of volunteer action to awaken an educated cohort to the realities of poverty and inequality in order to create a more active citizenry on development issues.

At the end of the research process we were able to look at the findings generated by our inquiries in light of the assumptions in this theory of change. Key learning points include:

- The assumption that volunteering leads to poverty alleviation in the first pathway needs to be more than a leap of faith, so as not to exploit or further marginalise the poorest. E.g. institutional factors can prevent a much-needed community focus in university volunteer work.
- The value that university volunteering programmes bring, in terms of transfer of technical capacities, is highly contingent on the quality of volunteer–community relationships.
- Alongside project-specific benefits university volunteering programmes can provide additional solidarity and 'symbolic capital' to communities they choose to partner with, especially because of their social standing in Filipino society and their security as established institutions.
- There is scope to widen a role for student-led and staff-led advocacy within volunteering programmes.
- The links between volunteer action, active citizenship and poverty alleviation in the second pathway are not spontaneous either. It is possible to go through the motions of volunteer activity without establishing an emotional or intellectual connection with the process.
- The way volunteering practice is constructed determines whether people continue to engage in development efforts after a structured opportunity comes to an end.
- Volunteer programmes have a better chance of affecting poverty if they also mobilise citizens within communities to work side-by-side with university volunteers.

Key implications

Clarify what the sector is looking for volunteering to achieve
Poverty alleviation is not synonymous with national development. The objectives of national development schemes often adversely affect the poorest and most marginalised. The academic and volunteering sectors need to consider what sort of progress we should be measuring volunteering for development programmes against, distinguishing temporary fixes from efforts that tackle social injustice.

Recognise that technical skills transfer relies on quality relationships
The value of university volunteering as a conduit of theoretical knowledge and specialisms is only translated into community impact through effective relationships. Without relationships founded on mutual respect, trust and understanding, it is difficult for university volunteers to transfer technical expertise, in ways which are appropriate and well received by communities.

Improve capacity to learn about impact
When learning about impact does not take place, volunteering becomes a mindless activity of mobilising human resources rather than a strategic tool for purposeful change.

Increase a community focus in volunteering programmes
University volunteer programmes do better at providing avenues for students to develop their skills and dissertations than affecting poverty. Academic and community priorities need to be balanced by increasing a focus on community change in programme design. This requires a significant shift from focusing on the needs of the student or staff to starting with what the community of actors as a whole wants to achieve.

Work to a broader definition of active citizenship
A lot of volunteering in universities is formally attached to opportunities provided by the institution. These are good platforms for exposure, but by themselves these activities do not guarantee volunteers will continue to be active in development concerns. Self-directed and inclusive active citizenship, which includes the volunteer actions of communities, needs to be actively enabled by university volunteering programmes.

Adequately fund volunteer programmes
Volunteering does not come for free without exploiting volunteers or communities. The research finds that the most satisfying and life-changing experiences are not the easiest. They require adequate financial and practical support.

2. Introduction

Since the very first days of *Valuing Volunteering*'s work in the Philippines (May 2012–May 2014), universities have been repeatedly mentioned as a key institutional support for volunteerism and active citizenship in the country. Within government, volunteering is recognised as one of the activities by which universities contribute to the attainment of societal values and national development. As such, Philippine universities are expected to perform three functions: instruction, research and extension. While extension work typically receives the least funding out of the three, many universities – public and private – have distinct volunteer programmes which in some cases go back to the 1980s and 1990s.

Non-curricular volunteer initiatives (e.g. university-led or student-led volunteer programmes) tend to run alongside instruction and research. This extension work takes different forms. Some universities connect volunteering initiatives to their locale, such as UP Los Baños's 'gown and town' partnership. Other institutions, such as the Ateneo universities, support volunteer placements to remote and excluded communities where few services reach.

Co-curricular volunteering interlinks directly with service learning and courses like the National Service Training Programme (NSTP). Through service learning, students and staff engage with development concerns through fieldwork or research projects nested within communities. These engagements can be requirements of graduation and tenure of staff posts or they can be pursued as elective choices, demanding a commitment from students and staff that goes above and beyond standard educational or work obligations. NSTP is slightly different because it is mandated community service that every student does as part of the national curriculum. It usually involves at least one semester of training and one semester of practical work beyond the classroom walls. While it is not voluntary, it is considered to be a platform to promote pro-social values (e.g. civic-mindedness) and act as a springboard to future acts of volunteerism, carried out under the volunteer's own volition.

In the Philippines, non-curricular and co-curricular volunteering activities under extension work range from conducting surveys, training, production and dissemination of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, technology promotion, rapid response and community-based programmes on specific concerns such as natural resource management, health, literacy, sanitation, community organisational management problems and curriculum improvement in basic education. (See Table 1 for more information on volunteering activity researched as part of this case study.)

The NCEAV

In December 2012, the National Conference on the Engagement of the Academe in Volunteering (NCEAV) was the first time that academic institutions, civil society organisations and government agencies from the three main island groups – Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao – came together to discuss university volunteering for development.

Convened by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the conference resulted in a manifesto written by participants on Volunteering for Development calling for greater synergy between the voluntary sector, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education. One of the main aims was to raise the profile of volunteering and increase research into the impact of volunteering on development. To paraphrase the words of the then Dean of the National College for Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG) at the University of the Philippines, M'am Edna Co, there was an interest in understanding when and how volunteering extends beyond personal impacts to societal ones. A few working parameters were agreed:

• Learning in higher education should be geared towards public service as a central focus.
• Marginalised groups should be involved in any associated research.
• Community partnerships should result in social transformation.
• Relevant research materials should be effectively disseminated so as to help address societal issues.

Post-NCEAV research activities

In response, a community of practice consisting of 15 universities from all over the Philippines was established, and AusAID funded VSO Bahaginan and the Institutional Network for Social Action (INSA) of Miriam College to carry out a research project, exploring the different forms of university-led volunteerism and the impacts of faculty-led and student-led efforts. Activity focused on collecting three case studies to inform the sector with practical, actionable steps to strengthen and further develop the role of academe in volunteering for development. Specific research objectives were identified as:

• identifying existing policies, programmes and services
• learning the process of academe–community engagement
• identifying gains and community impacts of programmes/ partnerships
• learning about problems and challenges encountered.

Valuing Volunteering Philippines was invited to partner in order to facilitate a participatory research design that involved and learned from all the stakeholders involved.

It was an opportunity for the global *Valuing Volunteering* project to be responsive to national priorities as well as realise its objective to build capacity in systemic and participatory inquiry among in-country institutions.

Contributing to the central *Valuing Volunteering* research question of 'How, where and when does volunteering affect poverty?' *Valuing Volunteering Philippines* was particularly interested in answering the following questions:

1. What kind of social change does university volunteering lead to and how do these changes contribute to poverty alleviation?
2. What kind of university-enabled volunteering is most effective at supporting poverty alleviation and sustainable development?
3. What can be learned from this sector to inform volunteering initiatives more widely in the Philippines?

About this report

Given the focus of *Valuing Volunteering* on the use of volunteering as an intervention for poverty alleviation, this case study report focuses on what we learned about the way in which university volunteering is or is not affecting poverty and development. It outlines the key findings and resulting implications from research conducted between July 2012 and October 2013. It positions the insights in relation to how impacts of university volunteering are framed and understood by the sector and makes some recommendations for volunteer programming and wider university volunteering policy. Hopefully its wider implications can help academic institutions, government agencies and NGOs strengthen the contribution that volunteer programmes make to complex social problems.

Where the research revealed a direct link between improving the effectiveness of volunteering as a tool for fighting poverty and the organisation of volunteering, the findings are included. For more general insights on good practice around managing, organising and supporting university volunteerism please refer to the policy and practice paper listed in the Appendix under "Other outputs related to this case study".

Focus of this case study

This case study connects six distinct inquiries carried out between July 2012 and October 2013 with six universities in the Philippines.

Geographical context

Figure 1 shows where the inquiries for this case study took place geographically (see Appendix for more context on each university). Inquiries one and two were led by the Lead Researcher for the Philippines component of the *Valuing Volunteering* project. They were brief inquiries in the very early stages of the project. They provided generic insights into the university context of the Philippines, why volunteering is used and the different ways in which it is adopted as a tool for change. They also provided an opportunity to map some of the known pathways from volunteer interventions to resulting changes in the volunteer and the community.

The first engagement took place with Jesuit Volunteers Philippines (JVP) based at a private university called Ateneo in Manila and the second took place with the Ugnayan ng Pahinungod programme at the state university, UP Los Baños in Laguna. Both programmes were considered long-standing volunteering functions of their respective universities and of the sector more widely.

Inquiries three, four and five were carried out by a research team comprising *Valuing Volunteering*, Miriam College and VSO Bahaginan as part of the post-NCEAV research activity. *Valuing Volunteering* took the lead in designing, facilitating and enabling co-researchers to conduct research activities. Case study sites were identified based on a set of criteria which broadly represented:

- the different island groups of the Philippines (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao)
- public and private universities
- experiences from social as well as science faculties
- programmes at different stages of development, from the long-established to the relatively new
- self-selection/eagerness on part of the university to be involved.

The sixth inquiry took place with Institutional Network for Social Action (INSA) at Miriam College in Manila, following the Director's involvement in the post-NCEAV research activity. *Valuing Volunteering Philippines* was invited to facilitate the multi-stakeholder, mixed-methods approach utilised in inquiries three to five. INSA was interested in the opportunity to reflect and gain clarity about what makes their volunteering programmes effective and they were happy for the learning to be used to inform the *Valuing Volunteering* project and the wider policy landscape surrounding volunteering for development in the Philippines.

Figure 1. Location of public and private universities

Public University
Private University

6. The Institutional Network for Social Action, Miriam College

1. Jesuit Volunteers Philippines, University of Ateneo

2. Ugnayan ng Pahinungod, UP Los Banos

3. The Social Work Degree Program, Bicol University

4. Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Bohol Island State University

5. Kristohanong Katilingban sa Pagpakabana, Xavier University

Manila

Puerto Princesa

Bohol

Political and institutional context

As a sector, the academe differs from traditional not-for-profit organisations or traditional welfare and social service delivery units within government. Universities do not have the physical resources or a sole remit to alleviate poverty and support community development. It has to balance the time and resources given to outreach work with demands for high teaching and research standards. This reality is reflected in Section 5a of the Volunteering Act (2007), which lists five considerations for volunteerism in higher education institutions (HEIs):

1. Involves sharing of technical knowledge
2. Promotes career advancement
3. Beneficial to educational sector and community
4. Done voluntarily
5. Rewards are not the primary motive

The form of volunteerism varies considerably across different universities. Each programme and its support mechanism is tied to a specific institutional context and shaped by diverse histories, values and agendas (see Appendix for more information on each university).

Volunteering context

In most cases, university volunteering involves student and faculty (staff) volunteers. Table 1 identifies the actors we engaged with, the nature of the volunteering platform and the work they carried out.

Many staff that work to support volunteering consider themselves as volunteers. This is especially the case when they do this work on top of day-to-day teaching commitments. Universities that have support offices like Kristohanong Katilingban sa Pagpakabana (KKP) in Xavier University, JVP at Ateneo University and INSA at Miriam College have staff specifically assigned to supporting volunteering platforms, the volunteers and the relationship with the community.

Some residents and community members also conceived of themselves as volunteers, particularly if they held mobilisation of leadership roles in their respective locations.

Broadly speaking there is a distinct wealth gap between volunteers in private and public institutions. This gap is replicated again between those who are able to attend university and those who cannot afford to. While some scholarships are available, people are generally considered to be privileged in the provinces if they have been able to attend any kind of university. This dynamic means that university volunteering initiatives are often positioned as one's duty to serve the country and those less fortunate.

Table 1. Volunteer activity in our inquiries

Institution	Actors engaging in research (2012–13)	Geographical focus of volunteer work	Thematic focus of volunteer work	Type of service learning	Support structures
Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation, University of Ateneo, Manila	3 staff members of JVP	Remote locations in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao in under-resourced schools, NGOs, Peoples Organisations and parishes	Teaching, training grass-roots community leaders, assisting cooperatives, helping to implement livelihood projects, educate on environmental issues, and uphold dignity of indigenous peoples	Non-curricular	One-year structured volunteer placement, supported by host partner, supervisory visits, mid-point reflection session and end evaluation
Ugnayan ng Pahinungod, UP Los Baños, Laguna	8 staff members and volunteers	On campus, in neighbourhoods close to campus and marginalised areas	Education (e.g. leadership and educational training for high school students; reading enhancement) and agriculture	Co-curricular and non-curricular	Supported by volunteer office. 200 student-led organisations are supported through provision of leadership, team building and training on how to understand a community.
Social Work Degree Programme, Bicol University, Legapzi	3 staff members, 8 volunteers, 20 community members, 29 college students, 32 elementary school children	Communities in Legazpi, usually disconnected from government services	Opening up opportunities for additional sources of income, improving relationship between communities and local government, facilitating new projects and advocating for better services	Co-curricular	Supported by structured 3-month programme, as part of long-term partnerships with communities. Staff support students while in placement.
Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Bohol Island State University, Bohol	18 students, 36 residents across three communities, 3 staff members, one multi-stakeholder session with 7 participants	Coastal communities in Bohol	Training, community development activities, linkages and partnership building, development of IEC materials	Co-curricular	Fieldwork visits typically take place once or twice a month. No financial support for activities.
Kristohanong Katilingban sa Pagpakabana (KKP), Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro	12 academic staff working at KKP office, 6 student volunteers, 11 community members, activists	Communities in Cagayan de Oro	Community development, literacy, ICT development to support farmers, issue advocacy	Co-curricular and non-curricular	All activities supported by staff at KKP office, which facilitates orientations and reflection sessions
Institutional Network for Social Action (INSA), Miriam College, Manila	7 INSA staff, 12 student volunteers, 7 staff volunteers, 7 community representatives, multi-stakeholder session with 7 participants	Informal settler communities close to the university and resource-poor communities all over the Philippines	Early childhood education, capacity building of parents	Non-curricular	All staff and student volunteer activities supported by INSA office

3. Methodology

The Valuing Volunteering project used two research approaches to collect and analyse insights about volunteering; Participatory Systemic Inquiries (PSI) and Participatory Systemic Action Research (PSAR). Both of these approaches enable us to get under the surface of how communities operate and how change happens.

Participatory Systemic Inquiries (PSI) allow a system of actors, actions and contexts to be mapped as a baseline against which change can be assessed (Burns 2012). When identifying the starting points (our baseline) for a project we might typically record those factors that have an obvious direct relation to our intervention. For example, if our aim is to increase girls' access to education, a 'traditional' baseline might record factors such as school enrollment, attendance and participation. PSI allows us to go deeper and reflect on how people, processes and the environment that they are situated within influence one another and the path to change. Doing this involves asking both broad and detailed questions which take us beyond the school walls and into the complexities of social systems such as, 'Are girls' supported by their family and the wider community to attend school?' 'What are the power dynamics within the community and how might these influence girls' attendance in school?'

This data is then used to determine how different factors affect one another, with the aim of learning about why change is or is not happening. While causal links between each part of a system can be identified, they are frequently not linear relationships. By allowing us to observe volunteer practices as part of a wider system rather than in isolation, PSI challenges our assumption that if we do *x* it will automatically lead to *y* and forces us to consider each intervention within the context in which it is taking place. For example, strengthening our understanding of the factors that impact on people's perceptions of volunteering was important in some inquiries to make sense of volunteers' effectiveness. A PSI mapping and analysis might take place over a 2–12-week period and can involve working with many different individuals and groups. In the Valuing Volunteering project we ran many different PSIs at the community, organizational and national levels. Where actors were motivated to respond to emergent findings, PSI formed the beginning of an action research process.

Participatory Systemic Action Research (PSAR) is an action research methodology which embeds reflection, planning, action and evaluation into a single process. The core principle behind action research is that we learn as much if not more from action than from analysis. It incorporates iterative cycles of action and analysis, allowing us to reflect at intervals on a particular action or approach and adapting it according to what we've learnt. The action research used by Valuing Volunteering was participatory because it was led by individuals directly affected by or involved in volunteering for development initiatives, and they defined the action research process and questions. It was systemic because we assessed the impact of these actions by considering the knock-on effects for the actors, actions and contexts comprising the wider social system. SAR typically takes place over a period of 18 months to three years.

Participatory systemic inquiry

Field visits to universities took place through a series of participatory systemic inquiries each lasting between two and four days. In all but the first case study site (UP Los Baños) the research directly involved volunteer programme support staff, volunteers (students and teachers) and communities (see Stakeholder Map in Figure 2). This multi-stakeholder approach enabled us to understand the impact and value of university volunteering from multiple perspectives. It helped us to see how volunteer efforts interacted with the wider social ecology of the communities and academic institutions in which they were embedded.

The initial two inquiries comprised interviews, participatory sessions and active participation in university events.

For the subsequent four inquiries, we adopted a mixed-methods approach combining semi-structured interviewing, informal discussion, and visual tools (e.g. drawing, storyboarding and systems mapping) to make our sessions relevant to the interests and life experiences of different participant groups. To navigate potential power dynamics we engaged each main stakeholder group on their own, before inviting participants to multi-stakeholder review and analysis sessions at the end of each inquiry process.

All the techniques were intended to provide opportunity for reflection and learning at the local level which could go on to inform our thinking at the national level.

Methods

The learning architecture for this case study can be organised around three sequential components and a fourth element which comprised sessions at regular intervals during the research process to discuss findings and implications (see Figure 3):

1. Parameter setting
2. Participatory inquiries
3. Systemic analysis
4. Reflection

1. Parameter setting

We held a series of conversations and group discussions to scope and inform the research. These included initial meetings with members of the in-country reference group for the *Valuing Volunteering* project and the creation of a core working group of NCEAV colleagues to guide the research process.

NCEAV working group

A core working group formed of the Director of INSA at Miriam College, a masters student at Miriam College, a Manager at VSO Bahaginan, and the Lead Facilitator of *Valuing Volunteering Philippines* met regularly over the course of the research. Initial meetings were focused on defining post-NCEAV research priorities and objectives to write a white paper to inform government policy on university volunteering.

In these group sessions we also crafted the starting questions for the inquiries. We looked at the main building blocks and specific bits of information we wanted to know from the three main stakeholder groups: community, volunteer support staff and volunteers (see Table 3 in Appendix for full question list). During each inquiry, further questions arose that were specific to the local or institutional context. A scheduled debriefing session at the end of each fieldwork day enabled us to brainstorm the most important findings and any subsequent questions they raised.

At a later stage of research we were joined by a previous VSO volunteer and Director of Ugnayan ng Pahinungod at UP Los Baños to support with analysis and writing activities.

Other informants

Alongside the NCEAV working group, *Valuing Volunteering Philippines* benefited from a number of meetings and discussions at the early phase of the research with members of the *Valuing Volunteering Philippines* reference group, especially VSO Bahaginan and the Centre for Citizenship, Leadership and Development at NCPAG.

Figure 2: Map of stakeholders for case study research

Wider community benefiting from activity

University volunteer platforms

Volunteers working for change
Stakeholder 1

Community participants engaging
Stakeholder 2

Understanding process

Understanding impact

Stakeholder 3
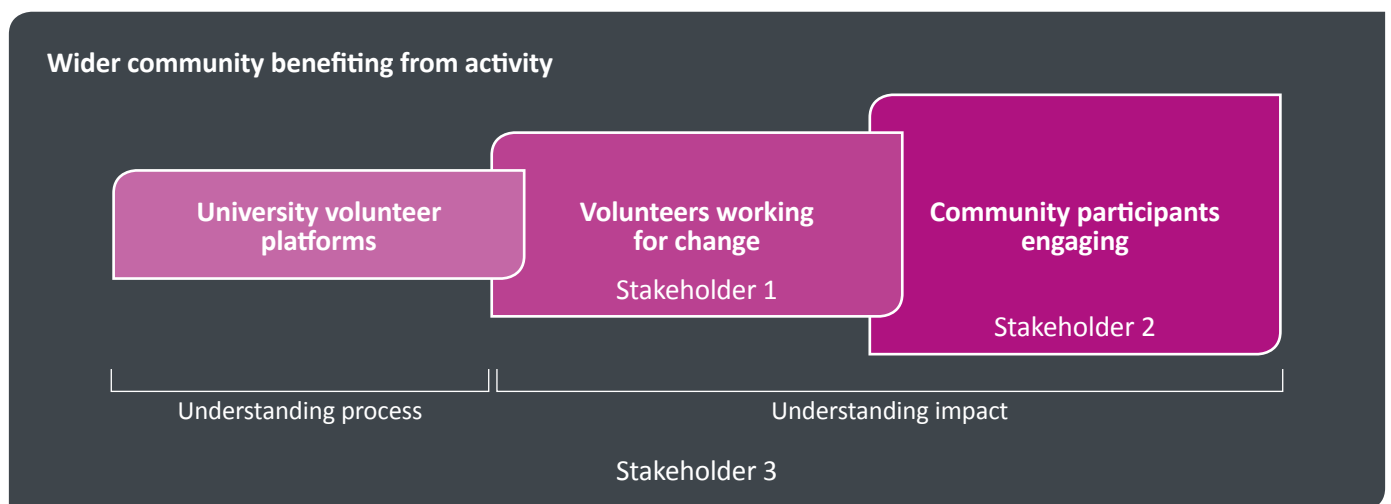
Figure 3. Case study components and methods across time

Legend:
- Project stage
- Activities
- Outcomes

Parameter setting

Inception meetings

Literature review

Agreed approach, including tools and techniques

Identified locations for participatory inquiry

Identification of Theory of Change

Participatory inquiries

Interviews and FGDs with volunteers and support staff

Impact mapping with storyboard

Impact mapping with effects tree

Drawing community development over time

Mapping actors and contribution

Rivers of experience

Barriers and strategies for volunteering

Community experience of volunteering

Systemic analysis

Mapping links between community issues and volunteer programme components

Generating data on impact from people's experiences

New questions to discuss

Reflection & validation

Multi-stakeholder sessions to review maps

Validation of NCEAV case study write-ups

Implications for university volunteer programmes

Opportunity to present research findings to CHED

Timeline:

- UP Los Banos
- Uni of Ateneo
- Xavier Uni
- Bicol Uni
- BISU Uni
- Miriam

July 2012 — September — November — January 2013 — March — May — July — September — November 2013

Valuing Volunteering Philippines also accessed an online platform set up on Eldis Communities by the *Valuing Volunteering* project. This was an opportunity to link to the Global Reference Group established by the *Valuing Volunteering* project to inform the country research. For example, we had a dialogue with a member of the reference group about advantages and limitations of the NCEAV manifesto. In addition, the masters student at Miriam College contributed a literature review examining the engagement of universities through critical social work theory concepts. Both of these contributions informed the framing of the inquiries.

At various points, ideas emerging from the research were tested in meetings and email communication with the funders of the NCEAV inquiries, AusAID, as well as representatives of the National Coalition for Volunteering (NCV).

2. Participatory inquiries

Interviews and group discussions

Interviews and group discussions were guided by the question framework (see Appendix, Section 2: Research Materials). We usually used these techniques at the beginning of an inquiry to learn about the wider context of the volunteering programme. The sessions usually combined space for reflection on changes, feelings and difficulties met during the time doing or supporting volunteer work and whole group discussion. We used these techniques mostly with volunteer support staff and volunteers.

Impact mapping with storyboard

We used this exercise with volunteers and volunteer support staff to facilitate their story about how the activities of volunteers bring about changes and why (see Figure 4). Box 1 corresponds to the change context, box 2 to the activities of volunteers, box 3 to the initial results of their actions, box 4 to the medium-term changes they have seen, and box 5 to the long-term changes they expect to see. Triangles 6 and 7 present an opportunity to explore assumptions that have been made that short-term changes lead to medium-term changes and medium-term changes will lead to long-term changes.

Figure 4. Outline of the storyboard
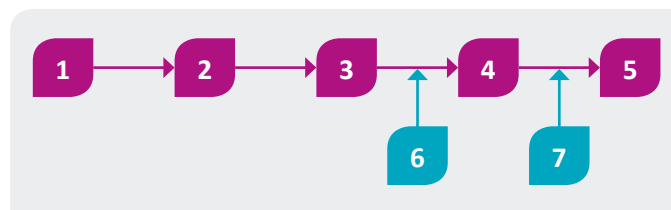
Participants were paired up and given a sheet with eight questions to support a conversation around the boxes and triangles on the storyboard (see Appendix). Questions covered the context or need, immediate changes at a personal or organisational level, changes in the way things are done, why these changes are important, assumptions linking immediate to medium-term changes, assumptions linking medium-term changes to long-term changes and barriers.

Participants were asked to think about their answers and summarise each idea on one Post-it note. To encourage them to build a picture together of how they see their actions having an effect – both on them and the community – each group was invited to add its Post-it notes to a large representation of the storyboard which we constructed and put on the wall.

Impact mapping with effects tree

On one occasion we used an adapted version of the Problem Tree – the Effects Tree – to map the effects of volunteer efforts with volunteer support staff and volunteers. In the first half of these sessions participants were asked to:

• brainstorm all the possible effects of volunteer action, as leaves of the tree
• cluster them by theme, around branches
• examine the sequence of changes, exploring what leads to what.

In the second half of these sessions participants were asked to look at the roots of the tree – e.g. the things that enabled the effects. They were asked to:

• brainstorm all the possible enabling factors of volunteer action
• cluster them by theme, around major roots
• examine the sequence of factors to take the roots as deep as they would go.

Aerial roots between branches and the ground were used to depict any instances where effects fed into roots to make volunteer efforts more or less impactful.

Drawing a representation of community development across time

We asked participants from communities to draw pictures to represent how their community had developed, as well as how they envision their future across three time points: (1) Past – 10–20 years ago; (2) Present – now; (3) Future – 10–20 years from now.


We told participants we wanted to understand their community and encouraged them to answer the corresponding questions with their drawings:

• What was it like to live here in the past? What were the good things about living here? What were the not so good things?
• What is it like to live here now? What are the good things about living here? What are the not so good things?
• What will your community be like in the future? What things will you keep the same? What things would you like to change?

The whole group was split into three so the sub-groups could focus on each time point. Sub-groups took it in turns to explain their picture to the wider group using one or several spokespeople. Listeners were encouraged to ask questions. The pictures allowed the researchers to follow up with specific questions and facilitate good discussion and feedback. Key follow-up questions included:

• What is in the gap between your present and your future? Where are you now and where do you want to be?
• Who made important contributions to your journey from the past to your present?
• Who will be active in your journey from your present to the future?
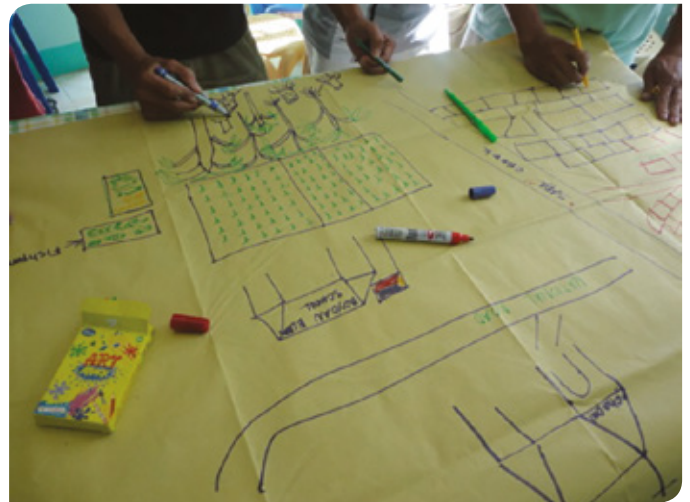
With children we simplified this activity to "Paint us a Picture". As individuals they were asked to divide their piece of paper into three and draw three pictures, which answered the following questions:

1) What is your volunteer like?
2) What happens when they come to the school?
3) How do you feel?

Children shared their pictures with the group and also with their volunteers.

Mapping actors and contribution

We asked participants to brainstorm all the people who are helping or who can help the community get to where it wants to be. They converted their ideas into a map with added words and pictures to explain what role each of the actors plays. At this point we prompted about volunteers working in the community if they had not already been mentioned. Discussion about the nature of different contributions to the community's development followed.

We asked participants to take this information and draw a complete 'buko (coconut) pie of effort'. We asked them to make slices to represent the size of the contribution of each actor.

Rivers of experience

This activity began with us asking participants to take a minute or two to reflect on their experiences as volunteers/service learners or extension workers, thinking about when they started until now.

Participants were then invited to draw their experience as a river. Two questions defined the aspects of their experience that we wanted them to focus on:

1. What has been your journey?
2. How have your relationships changed?

To answer these questions participants were encouraged to consider a range of characteristics that could feature in their river, including:

- Where is the river widest, where is it most narrow?
- Is the course of the river straight or windy?
- Are there any tributaries feeding into your river?
- What is the water like? Smooth or rough?
- Does it branch off and go in different directions?
- Is anything in the river – e.g. obstacles?
- What are the banks of the river like?

During a feedback session we typically heard from four to five participants who described their rivers. Listeners were encouraged to ask questions and relate the journeys to their own rivers of experience.

On one occasion time was short so a group of volunteers were asked to review a gallery of previously drawn rivers and choose the one that spoke most directly to their own experience. Sharing their explanation about their selection formed the jumping-off point of a group discussion.

3. Systemic analysis

In half the inquiries, we used systems mapping to better understand issues and relationships, bringing together information and views from a number of participants onto one page. Towards the end of each participatory inquiry, we created maps of the social, economic and environmental issues prominent in the communities we had visited alongside the institutional issues to see how the efforts of volunteers fit into these wider contextual issues.

After an initial brainstorm of emergent issues, members of the research team usually worked together to organise data according to colour coding standardised across the wider *Valuing Volunteering* project to allow comparison across maps:

- **RED** = Issues
- **BLUE** = Stakeholders
- **GREEN** = Factual Information/Observations
- **BLACK** = Possible Solutions/Actions or New Questions

We added quotes in ballpoint pen. Lines between any entries were drawn to indicate a relationship. We discussed whether the links should be one-way or two-way. To be specific, the process of visually mapping the data helped us to look at the 'how' and 'why' of specific issues. It helped us to identify:

- possible links or causal pathways between entries on the map
- realities that challenge assumptions
- barriers and opportunities to change.

4. Reflection

We held regular meetings as the NCEAV working group to make sense of what we had seen and heard through our inquiries. When we were in the field, we ended every day with a reflection on content issues and process issues. This helped us to distil the issues that resonated most into a list and gave us the opportunity to review how the techniques were working.

Later these meetings focused on discussing implications for policy and how we could most effectively communicate key messages.

4. Findings

This section pulls together the findings to answer the central *Valuing Volunteering* research question of 'How, where and when does volunteering affect poverty?', and the three sub-questions of interest for this case study:

1. What kind of social change does university volunteering lead to and how do these changes contribute to poverty alleviation?

2. What kind of university-enabled volunteering is most effective at supporting poverty alleviation and sustainable development?

3. What can be learned from this sector to inform volunteering initiatives more widely in the Philippines?

This section begins by reviewing the current theory of change articulated by the sector to explain how and why university volunteering leads to poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

To examine its validity and inherent assumptions, we structure the data around direct impacts on poverty and indirect impacts on poverty via an increase in active citizenship.
We look at what changed in communities because of volunteering, mechanisms (e.g. relationships) that made the changes possible, barriers (e.g. organisational constraints) which disrupted community outcomes and factors influencing the relationship between active citizenship and poverty alleviation. We then revisit the theory of change in light of our analysis to incorporate the findings.

A working theory of change

Theory of Change (ToC) is a tool that helps to articulate and present the (often complex) pathways through which an intervention can or cannot be successful. It provides an important visual basis to re-examine programme activities and focus in the context of data from real people's experiences about routes to impact.

At the early stage of the case study research, we carried out brief inquiries with Ateneo and Los Baños universities to understand the university context in the Philippines, why volunteering is used and the different ways in which it is adopted as a tool for change. We also reviewed current discourse about university-led volunteering for development.

The NCEAV and subsequent manifesto expressed a desire to elevate university-led volunteering as a force for poverty alleviation and national development. This aspiration can also be found in the vision and mission statements of some universities, which stretch beyond academic excellence to aspirations to bring their institutions 'closer to communities' in support of national development.

The current discourse on the role of university volunteering for development articulates two broad change trajectories, which this empirically grounded case study goes on to inform. The first is by improving the lives of communities directly through volunteer action. The second is by awakening an educated cohort to the realities of poverty and inequality in order to create a more active citizenry on development issues.

Figure 5 illustrates the sector's view about how we move from a volunteering intervention initiated by a university (on the left) to a development outcome in a community (towards the right). Purple boxes identify key activities of university volunteer programmes. Grey boxes signify what immediate changes take place. Blue boxes signify anticipated intermediary changes, which enable medium-term (green boxes) and longer-term outcomes (light green boxes).

The upper pathway is often articulated as the strategic advantage of universities in volunteering for development. Through their programmes, they can make available a rich pool of human resources that has specialisms and access to the latest theoretical and practical knowledge. This intellectual capital can be used to respond to needs and create new solutions that benefit communities living in poverty and contribute to national development. The ability for volunteer interventions to result in tangible changes to the lives of communities is a critical assumption in this pathway.

In the lower pathway, university volunteering platforms contribute to poverty alleviation indirectly, through providing exposure and experiences which build values and knowledge. This new-found perspective is valuable to society, particularly when this awareness translates into a socially responsible way of being and doing. This is articulated as a development objective in the Volunteer Act (2007) which states that university volunteering can "raise the consciousness of the youth and develop the culture of volunteerism among the citizenry".

This theory of change was further developed by Dr Patricia Licuanan, Chairperson of the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) at the NCEAV. She presented a framework to unify university-led university volunteer efforts towards common objectives: poverty alleviation and national development. She explained that when students, faculty staff, non-academic personnel and alumni work with disadvantaged communities through the various academic platforms (e.g. service learning and volunteer programmes), the experience translates into

"greater understanding of the structural causes of poverty, to critically view globalisation and economic growth ... to become aware of social realities that the privileged are shielded from and develop more solidarity with the poor ... It is intended and hoped that students will become active citizens, professionals and leaders who live the important principles of democracy, social justice, service, human rights, peace and environmental sustainability and thus, contribute to poverty alleviation and national development."
(Licuanan 2012)

Figure 5: A working theory of change
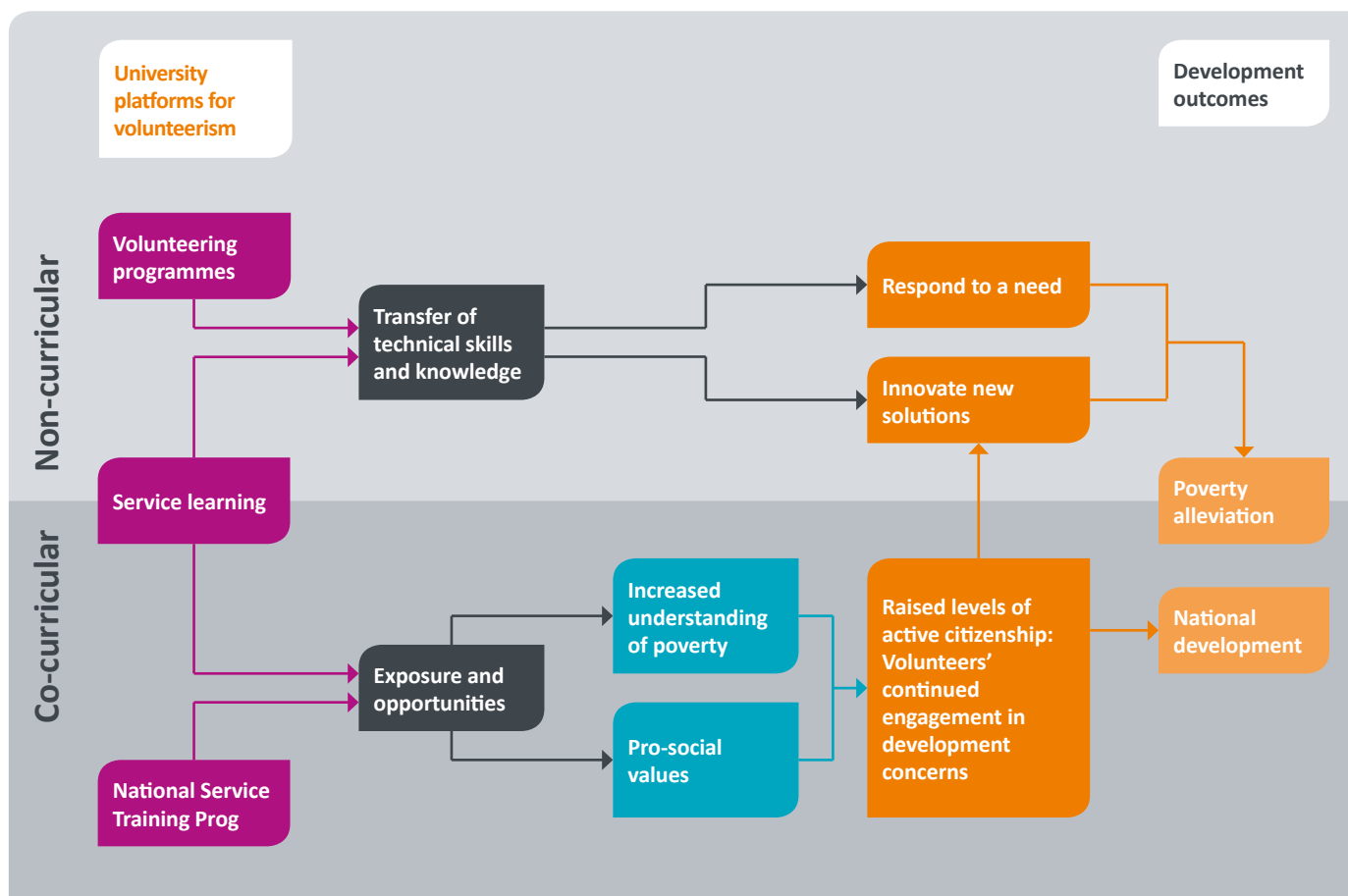
The idea is that university volunteering opportunities will lead volunteers to make different life choices which could lead to further engagement in development concerns is a critical assumption of this pathway.

The following pages explore the relationships between intent, action and change articulated in this theory of change.

Direct impacts on poverty

The following thematic sections explore the changes in communities that result from university volunteer action, the key factors supporting those changes to happen and the things that limit effectiveness.

Improving the lives of people living in poverty

If university volunteering is to play a meaningful role in poverty alleviation, then we need to make an assessment as to whether it can make a difference to the lives of people living in poverty.

We found university volunteers can create a number of changes in communities which should help with alleviating poverty. Some of the volunteer programmes we reviewed resulted in greater self-reliance and self-direction on the part of the community, but this happened slowly and over time. It was harder to see impact from one-time activities in communities, like annual tutorials or gift-giving.

When the focus of university volunteering is described by various programme staff as being on "the poorest of the poor in Cagayan de Oro", the marginalised in "far-flung locations", the landless in Manila or communities "where government agencies are afraid to go" in Legazpi, the need for knowledge, services and representation is wide-ranging. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that we found examples of volunteering and service learning across most academic disciplines including hard sciences like chemistry and biology, social sciences like psychology and economics, and applied sciences like agriculture.

In our participatory sessions with communities we were able to identify a number of outcomes that related to specific volunteer activities and projects taking place at the universities we visited. These are summarised by theme in Table 2. They represent changes mentioned directly by communities or by two or more stakeholders (i.e. students and faculty staff). We were able to document changes taking place to lots of different aspects of community life:

- **improved capacity**, through imparting general (e.g. how to conduct meetings) and specific skills/knowledge (e.g. a new livelihood skill)
- strengthened social capital, through new and improved grass-roots organisations and gaining links and trust to government departments
- **improved economic possibilities**, through income-generating activities, access to grants, and engagement in local businesses
- **Improved community infrastructure**, including school and technological improvements
- **Improved psychological wellbeing**, through increases in confidence, active participation and satisfaction

(refer to Table 2 in Appendix for more detail). The contribution of these activities to the development of communities was verified when we looked at the contribution of universities in relation to other actors, like government departments and the community itself.

As examples, the community allotted a sizeable chunk of its pie chart to Bicol University (see diagram below left), which was larger than NGOs. They revised their diagram to accrue half the impact of community change to residents, highlighting that 'outside help' had not diminished the role and responsibilities of community members in the change effort.

Bohol Island State University (BISU) is as important as central government departments working on environmental and fishery concerns to this community in Bohol (see right). Again, the community-based organisations (identified in the diagram as PCPPA) are allotted a significant piece of the pie for the changes that have taken place in the locality.

In general, the longer the commitment, the more concrete the changes. The changes in Table 1 all arose from volunteer programmes which consciously aim to offer consistent and reliable support to communities. In the quote below a member from Lumbia community talks through the differences in her community over the past 10–20 years or so, "1980s Lumbia before. Not many houses, many trees, many grasslands all over. 1997 XU [Xavier University] came to Lumbia, they started in 2003 to sponsor 200 kids from ES [elementary school] to HS [high school] and three have graduated from college … For the mothers they have undergone trainings and seminars. Lumbia now is bigger. Now Lumbia is bigger with many houses and a big school, Many Sendong victims have been relocated from Lumbia. Now with our relationship in Xavier mothers were able to put up a CO-OP [cooperative], Lumbia mini producers co-operative. We are given training such as basic accounting. Xavier students are the teachers."

The community mentions a number of interventions connected to the efforts of Xavier University set against events in their history, including the impact of typhoon Sendong in 2011. The volunteers at the university are mentioned in relation to education of children through elementary and high school, trainings and seminars, and support setting up a co-operative for mothers. They received basic accounting training by students at Xavier. During our visit, we bought some of their produce, which is available on campus to buy.

With staff at Bicol University, we discussed what made it possible for communities to have formed their own associations and participate in the wider development of their area.

Valuing Volunteering: "What changes – knowledge and skills?"
Staff: "Yes and of course attitudes – coming to meetings on time, participating on discussions."

The next day, the same staff member shared a very tangible example of a shift:

"They do do some organising themselves of the meetings and people are bringing packed lunch for the meetings which do show that they are valuing the meetings."

Before this, community members would leave around lunch time to go back to their houses to cook and eat lunch, which disrupted the flow of all-day meetings. Arriving at this point took time, but it was a necessary and important marker in the self-determination of the community to be active in their own development. If this community journey had not accompanied volunteer interventions it would be difficult to see how impacts would be sustained over the longer term.

When giving is a one-way street, impact is less obvious. During our engagement with universities we learned that a lot of volunteering in the educational sector is directed by what the 'giver' has to offer, which is not necessarily the same thing as what the community needs most.

"I have seen short-term outcomes, like training and after that they forget. Many of the training they gave, they actually forgot now because that was a long time ago. But if it pertains to farming, they would say yes we are still doing it now."
Volunteer support staff, Bicol University

The volunteering programme at BISU faced similar problems. Our systems map highlighted that volunteer efforts to plant mangroves were being undermined by people cutting them down. The volunteer programme at Bicol university found it difficult to find ways to support coconut farmers whose land had been purchased at a low price from government to make space available for a regional airport. This was exceptionally concerning to community members, and some were visibly upset, recounting their situation in our group sessions. Significant effort is needed on the part of volunteer programme staff to establish an approach that can respond to the complexity and resistance of pathways that cause poverty and marginalisation. As illustrated in the quote below, it requires a conscious awareness about what volunteers want to achieve with communities and a determination to tackle the hard issues,

> **"Where do we really want to go? To achieve? If we want to create impact, then we have to put up mechanisms for facilitating directions. For the partner orgs ... with us. It is joining those road maps. And this would include a strategy for phase out or contribute to the development of the organisation and its strategic engagement."**
> Volunteer support staff, Miriam College

This is in contrast to the common habit of giving gifts, food, trainings, and money on a one-off basis, which doesn't do much to affect the underlying causes of poverty. For example, staff working in the Department for Social Welfare at Bicol University consider their community involvement as far more comprehensive than the efforts of other faculties and departments. Their approach is to build relationships and long-term engagements, over 10 years, which is markedly different to response-driven volunteering or initiatives limited to annual or irregular engagements. In these cases academe-led volunteering is a one-off affair like gift-giving:

> **"Others [departments] would be on a need-basis, for example, tutorial services. Yes, one stop."**
> Staff, university volunteer programme, Bicol University

These acts of care are reactions to circumstances but not interventions that change situations for communities. It was sad to see this model of volunteering transfer to the community level. In a picture depicting what another community in Manila thought life would be like in 10 years' time, residents – who are also local volunteers – listed feeding programmes as a key activity. The assumption underpinning its inclusion in a future scenario was that people will still be hungry and without means to secure their own food. It is good to see that communities still see a place for local action, but it is hard not to wish they will be directing their efforts somewhere else in 10 years. But to do so requires a strategic approach to identifying root causes of problems, mobilising on complex, perhaps less immediately satisfying, volunteer initiatives and lobbying to change the socio-economic context which frames people's options.

Summary of implications: Improving the lives of people living in poverty

- The research has highlighted a valid role for university volunteers in development issues.
- However, community change is not synonymous with volunteer action. It depends on the sorts of activities and opportunities created by a volunteer programme.
- A consistent commitment works better than one-time activities, especially when working with communities dealing with high levels of poverty in combination with low collective capacity to affect change. This is because change in these circumstances takes time.
- To have impact, volunteer activities need to be oriented around things that will be useful to the community as opposed to what the volunteer has to offer.
- So, impact necessitates a strategic approach that can identify root causes of problems and ultimately change situations for communities.

Table 2: Changes in the community as a result of volunteer activities in three universities

| Effects	Bicol University	BISU	Xavier University
Improved capacity			
General skill /knowledge	Developed organisational skills – e.g. conducting meetings		Learning new skills from different seminars (e.g. accounting)
	More children from the community going to college		Communities becoming more involved in education and developmental activities
Knowledge specific to project intervention	Learned how to make floor mats for sale	Increased awareness about benefits of mangroves	Having a greater knowledge of children's rights and giving it importance
Strengthened social capital			
Bonding capital	Formation of grass-roots organisations (e.g. women senior citizens' groups)		Better work relationships among community members
Linking capital	Links to officers in Government with expertise aligned to community interests and livelihood needs.	People's organisation gains trust of the government department	Opportunity to join partners and communities to share successes at collaborative learning summit
	community and local government units		
Improved economic possibilities			
The chance of economic improvement	Skills for additional source of income – e.g. food-processing training for women	Communities paid for planting and looking after mangroves	Engaging in small businesses following seminars and setting up a cooperative
Improved community infrastructure			
	Facilitated small-scale infrastructure development in the area – e.g. improvement to the school		Website and text messaging service for farmers to know market price of produce
			Money from DOLE and grant from Department of Agriculture
Improved personal wellbeing			
Psychological wellbeing	Enhanced sense of hope and therefore more active participation	Satisfaction associated with teaching students (e.g. how to plant trees)	Improved sense of confidence among community members who can share knowledge and skills

Relationships make the transfer of technical expertise more responsive to community needs

University volunteers hold a privileged position in society. They have the means to access the latest knowledge, thinking and learning facilities in ways that people living in disadvantaged communities cannot. The research indicates that effective volunteers are encouraged to intentionally build relationships. Relationships are recognised as an important part of the change process because they make it possible to gain the trust of the community. This trust gains volunteers access to contextual information that helps volunteers to tailor their support and technical input to community needs. The more immersed the volunteer is in community life, the faster this process becomes.

When becoming an 'insider' strengthens what you can do as an 'outsider'
Volunteers frequently cite relationships as a key vehicle enabling them to have an impact. Once a human connection is made based on an honest appreciation of what each person can bring to the mix, understanding and commitment usually follows. This is important for introducing new ideas, like technical knowledge and retaining volunteers in their placements. One student volunteer described some of the relational challenges she faced, such as climbing a mountain,

> **"My hardship was in adjusting to my work and community. They are Indigenous Peoples so their sensibilities are very different from us working in the city. So at first I could not understand the language, but I could eventually. Also some of the adjustment was the work as I was not doing what my course was. There was a time I wanted to quit already. I don't know what I am supposed to do. They think I know everything. The organisation. There was a moment when I became really honest and verbalised that I don't know. This was the start of the open relationship between me and them. What I learnt is that volunteering is really a partnership. It is not that you go and are superior. You learn as much from them. Maybe I learned more."**
> Student volunteer, Miriam College
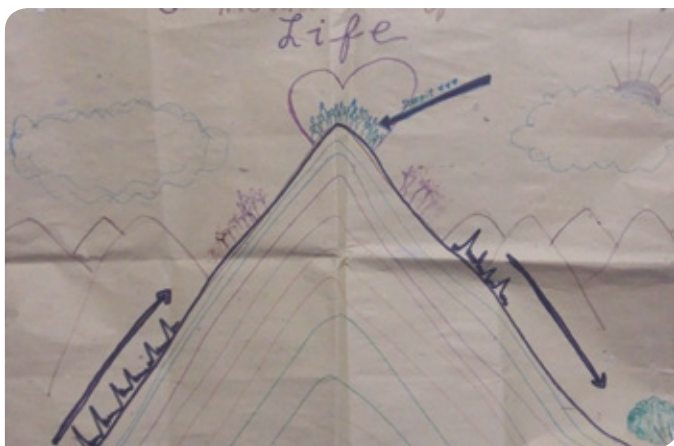
The social work department at Bicol University has created a designated space in the schedule for volunteers and community to get to know one another on a personal level. This ingredient in the design of the volunteer programme was seen as the foundation of a successful placement. Students spend the first month of their three-month community engagement work living as a member of the community,

> **"They talk to ordinary people, attend meetings, go house to house and have formal interviews".**
> Staff member, Bicol University

The student volunteers informed us that they operate in formal and informal spaces, creating an opportunity for volunteers and the community members to get to know each other, build mutual respect, trust and cooperation. It is only after this period that volunteers develop a programme of work to complement community priorities. This can involve setting up seminars with skilled professionals to teach communities new skills or advocating with the community in order to obtain better services.

This experience is contrasted with a different volunteer programme where student volunteers only visit the community a handful of times across the academic year.

> - *Valuing Volunteering*: **"In your experience what is the relationship of students with community members? Do they interact with the community much?"**
> - Staff member: **"Not so much. They don't develop skills of communication because when you go out in the community you have to feel what they feel. You set aside yourself to relate to what they need."**
> Staff member and volunteer, BISU

Students and faculty volunteers do not always find the process of interacting with community members easy. It is a skill they have to learn. Without it, they are unable to put themselves in the shoes of community members. This is made easier with immersive experiences because students live and work locally, learning the language, customs and culture.

The role of volunteer support staff in community relationship building
The nature of university life means there is a continuous but variable flow of human resources, with differing levels of expertise and interest in volunteering. It is difficult to expect transient volunteers to coordinate the ongoing relationship needed for long-term engagements. The community needs a point of contact and the volunteer programme needs institutional memory and oversight of changing community needs and interests.

At Bicol University, faculty staff saw themselves as volunteers lending their time on evenings and weekends to keep the resource base of volunteers responsive to local realities. For example, they take the time to understand the sorts of skills community members will use every day so they can orient livelihood training to these areas. When technology transfer or some specific skill is required beyond the remit of the social work department, staff would link the community to other university departments. To manage the workload that accompanies this investment in relationship building, the programme works with a few communities at a time for a minimum of 5–10 years each.

Summary of implications:
Relationships make the transfer of technical expertise more responsive to community needs

- Intentionally building relationships is an important part of the change process.
- Without a relationship founded on mutual respect, trust and understanding, it is hard for volunteers and communities to work effectively with one another.
- It is easier for volunteers to remain detached on infrequent visits. Immersive experiences are more likely to foster personal relationships.
- Volunteer programmes should think about how to create the space in schedules and orientations to focus on relationship building.
- Faculty volunteers can make a valuable input into student volunteer programmes by nurturing a relationship with the community that extends beyond any individual placement or volunteer.

A unique role for universities in shaping a social context that supports pro-poor development

Alongside making tangible changes through specific volunteering activities and projects, we learned that universities can influence development that is pro-poor by acting as a bridge, linking marginalised communities to services and decision-makers, lending legitimacy to the concerns and actions of communities, and providing a steady presence that is unwavering through the journey of change. These contributions provide additional support to communities struggling to escape poverty and right social injustices. The commitment required to support this sort of social change is made possible by the nature of universities as geographically and socially established institutions which can provide stability, credibility and a steady supply of volunteers.

From plugging gaps in service provision to acting as a bridge between two worlds

One-off, responsive volunteering in universities tends to plug gaps in services faced by communities. For example, feeding programmes respond to an immediate lack of purchasing power among communities to buy or grow their own food. The approach taken by some universities to their volunteer work encouraged us to examine poverty through a social justice lens. This perspective revealed that the community issues underpinning immediate needs are inherently complex and politically fraught.

To illustrate, one staff member described the context of his volunteering experience. Traditional upland communities were getting exploited by lowlanders who had more experience in business.

> **"They know in the traditional way but when you teach them in the popular way you want them to survive in a world that is already changing around them. You think about whether you are affecting the status quo in the community. But the people are actually being bullied by the Tagalogs, the lowlanders because these people know how to do business. The people have to trade products but because the lowlanders know they don't know how to compute money they harass them with a very low price. So the effect is they are repressed and this is a threat to their survival."**
> Staff volunteer, Miriam College

While we were unable to corroborate a community perspective on this situation, we did get to meet communities who see themselves as disadvantaged by government initiatives that fall under the banner of 'national development'. We engaged directly with:

- coconut farmers who have had their land compulsory purchased (at a very low price) by government to make way for a new airport in the province of Albay
- informal settlers in Metro Manila who have been living in a state of long-term uncertainty because of a major road building plan threatening displacement.

In these kinds of situations volunteers from universities and the volunteering programmes they are linked to play a different role. At the Department for Social Work at Bicol University (Albay) we saw volunteers from universities actively linking community issues to government services and funded projects. Where the government agencies dare not go, the university volunteers go. We asked why local government workers do not engage with some communities.

> "One of the reasons is peace and order. Other government agencies are afraid to go to these communities, and through the presence of students and the faculty, we bridge the relationships between what they require and we have provided a certain assurance. The students are able to survive so there is nothing to worry. And it convinced government institutions to help."
> Faculty staff member, Bicol University

Through its students and faculty, the university bridges relationships. They facilitate contact and cooperation between the community and government agencies. Volunteer students told us about a time they invited the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) as resource person on organic farming as a response to a community need. The MAO imparted knowledge, and the community provided materials for demonstration.

This linking role is particularly important in communities that have been marginalised and who lack the knowledge and self-belief to approach government departments on their own. In the department's flagship location for its volunteer programme, volunteers had managed over time to equip community members with the know-how and confidence to identify and approach relevant government agencies by themselves. Beginning their work in 1997, staff described Mabini community as "largely on their own". On asking what this means in practice they explained,

> "If they have problems, they would just come here. We may not come there anymore. They were able to do things on their own. They already know what to do. They are the ones now deciding for their organization."
> Staff member, Bicol University

This change was confirmed with the community during an activity which looked at the contribution of different stakeholders to the community's development.

> "Government is big [contributor] as they help a lot by giving funding as it comes from the national government. The local government takes the same because the Local Government Office is an instrument to the government to reach out to the people. Without the Barangay officials we would not be that successful. The residents have a big stake as they help with whatever they do."
> Community member, Mabini

When communities are able to link with confidence they no longer need the university to act as a bridge. They can realise their rights to access services on their own terms. Asked how this change was made possible, a staff member explained,

> "With government services, for example with Department of Agriculture, we teach farmers how to coordinate with government offices."
> Staff member, Bicol University

Legitimising community action through generating 'symbolic capital'

Our conversations highlighted how arduous and long a process it is to self-organise at the community level to voice concerns and rights in formal decision-making platforms when political and economic pressures are working hard in the background to silence or discredit you. It necessitates a sure-footedness and level of understanding to maintain a position at the negotiating table which is typically gained through years of grooming in corporate or political life. And overcoming setbacks requires a steadfastness and level of resilience not easy to come by. The value that universities can bring communities in these sorts of situations is what staff at Miriam College termed 'symbolic capital' in a multi-stakeholder session with community members.

The community's association with an academic institution through its volunteers gives the community credibility with other actors such as government. Universities are important pillars of society. They can use their social standing to validate and advocate for the concerns of the poorest through volunteering programmes. They are also important for changing how communities feel about themselves,

> "We lack funds we don't have capacity to put up a business. The social work department is the one that became the source, the key to learning as they came and gave us confidence and strength."
> Community member, Legazpi

> "If I contribute something of myself to the community they feel important because I am contributing."
> Student volunteer, Xavier University

At Xavier University a key plank of volunteer work is advocacy. While we were visiting Xavier University we were invited to attend a "noise barrage" organised by volunteers to argue for justice for victims of a series of unprovoked and unexplained murders in January and February 2013. This show of solidarity was powerful. Lasting for 10 minutes at 12 noon, the aim was to create as much noise as possible, inviting passers-by to join in by clapping their hands or tooting the horn of their cars. The plan was simple but specific: raise levels of noise to raise levels of awareness, increase column space in the local newspapers and push local political action on the issue. Within a day of the demonstration, the group had secured a meeting with the chief of local police to seek commitment on investigations and prosecutions.

In a context where change at the political and economic level can be stubbornly slow, the inquiries highlighted how volunteers can promote a more 'human' development that truly advocates for people's rights.

A steady presence that does not produce dependency

Universities bring value to development work through their existence as stable organisations, which "can keep working with communities" (Volunteer support staff, BISU). Once they have been established geographically in communities, they tend not to move locations. This stability is increasingly unusual. Emerging trends related to globalisation mean that private companies move their operations from place to place. Not even international NGOs with six-month to three-year programme funding cycles can compete with the power of universities to leverage their resources to build community wealth. This was a potential not fully realised in a lot of cases. In one example, which was an exception to the rule, we noticed that at Xavier University the cooperative set up by mums in Lumbia has a ready outlet for selling its banana and cassava chips to students and staff on campus.

Universities are in a position to work 'deep' with communities with commitments that span decades. Their pool of volunteers is naturally renewed each year, as new students and staff enter the institution, making it possible to sustain a flow of human resources. In this research we have seen how this dynamic has enabled forward-thinking volunteer departments the freedom to tackle more deep-seated issues that require long-term efforts, such as community mobilisation and organisation. This consistency and reliability is important to communities, especially those who have been ignored by government services or who are marginalised.

This fact did not stop university volunteer programmes asking themselves whether they were creating dependency among communities by their presence. The sorts of questions volunteers and support staff asked themselves in our reflection spaces on programme effectiveness are:

> 'Have we created dependency? How do we facilitate the process of phasing out?'

Combining community organising principles with outreach work was considered to be one strategy. Xavier University had an exit plan it had shared with the community so they were both moving towards the same target. For Bicol University the time to exit is when the community has capacity to run its own affairs and access services and resources are already in place.

What we learned is that a timeline which works for one community won't necessarily map onto another. It can depend on levels of trust, previous experiences, the role of individuals or even outside events that influence the number and focus of challenges that the community faces,

> "We started in mid 90s, in 1995. We were supposed to phase out but they insisted for us to extend so we stayed. This is when the typhoon came and farmers were asking for more help and we were able to access funding. They registered with Securities and Exchange Commission. Now they have their own bank-books and they run their own affairs"
> Volunteer support staff, Bicol University

In one multi-stakeholder discussion with members of a community, volunteers and support staff at Miriam College, we realised we need a more nuanced understanding of what we mean by dependency and sustainability. For sure, after 10 years we should be expecting that communities can run their own meetings and take the initiative on the direction they want to go and how to get there. But to expect that these capacities can translate into being able to tackle deep-seated injustice or sudden disasters by themselves is probably naïve.

This caused us to reflect that at a societal level we are happy to accept that governments can depend on one another for assistance. We describe these arrangements as bilateral agreements and we are comfortable when companies link with government sectors under the guise of public–private partnerships. Yet we are uneasy when we talk about long-term partnerships to change the rules of the game with the people who are forgotten by those in a better position. Relationships for change built on solidarity are not easily fostered within tightly defined project parameters. They require flexibility and a determination to see the issues of poverty through to a positive outcome.

Summary of implications:
A unique role for universities in shaping a social context that supports pro-poor development

- National development agendas do not always align with poverty alleviation objectives. Sometimes they can disadvantage the poorest.
- A social justice lens on volunteering for development is valuable. It highlights the inherent complexity of problems faced by marginalised communities.
- University volunteer programmes can contribute to a social context that supports pro-poor development. They achieve this by actively linking communities to authorities and providing a credibility that alters wider perceptions about what is socially acceptable.
- This is not a role every kind of institution can play in the volunteering for development sector. Universities are unique in their social standing and stability as institutions, allowing them to work 'deep' with communities.
- Long-term engagements are not always indicators of dependency, especially when they become partnerships to tackle entrenched problems.
- More university volunteer programmes could strengthen the impact of volunteer deployment on poverty alleviation if combined with advocacy activities to influence decision-makers and uphold people's rights.

Features of the university system limit the effectiveness of volunteer programmes

University volunteer programmes are intended as a force for poverty alleviation and national development. There is a gap, however, between this rhetoric and the design of volunteer programmes to fit features of the university system. This means programmes cannot tailor volunteer interventions to get to the root causes of issues. Communities can be left feeling like social laboratories, and saturation of volunteering activity reduces their receptiveness. The consequence is a trend of greater accountability to the volunteer and wider university institution than the community the volunteers work with.

The research revealed a number or organisational factors that influenced how volunteer programmes work. In this section we identify some of the institutional mechanisms that divert or block pathways to impact for people living in poverty.

Ideological conflict and lack of awareness

Some departments articulate the reasoning and design of their volunteer programmes as primarily a tool for student and faculty development.

> "It is a school-based programme. We prioritise what the students learn. We are more interested in the effects on the volunteer of exposure to community realities. We also have indicators for community impact – but they are secondary."
> Advocacy and mobilisation specialist, university volunteer programme, UP Los Baños

Across university campuses faculty staff expressed scepticism about whether there is a role for a volunteer organisation within a university setting, which is about research and instruction. This perception of volunteering within universities runs counter to the 2007 Volunteer Act which explicitly gives universities a mandate to support volunteerism. Some of this clearly comes down to leadership. But not every university is aware of the legislation's existence or substance. As a document the law specifies that volunteer interventions should be designed in such a way that they provide an enabling and empowering environment both on the part of the community and the volunteer. But it does not elaborate on what accountability to communities involved in hosting and working with volunteers should look like. We found that more could be done by government agencies like PNVSCA to engage universities about the implications of the law for their function and operations.

At the institutional level, a more traditional leadership within some university campuses perceives off-site education, volunteering or fieldwork as merely a way of having fun. It is not a valued activity that is encouraged.

The academic calendar

Semester dates and curriculum requirements make the academic calendar relatively inflexible. Co-curricular volunteering including fieldwork and community-based research has to take place within enrolment periods. Non-curricular volunteering often takes place on evenings, weekends and semester breaks. The availability of volunteers is constrained by these factors. Coordinating curriculum, faculty staff and community timetables makes it difficult in practice to respond to community needs and priorities. The exception is when a disaster elicits an emergency response.

A faculty-by-faculty approach

A piecemeal approach to volunteering within universities makes oversight of quality and accountability almost non-existent. Many faculties work on their own, so the good community development practices of one department may not translate to another. Students, staff and communities end up having very different experiences of volunteering and what it can achieve.

The least resourced of the tripartite system

It is widely acknowledged that extension work receives much less time and money than instruction and research. When volunteering is not adequately supported, this affects the motivation of teachers and faculty staff to organise effective activities.

> "Community engagement is taken for granted because of the requirement in teaching load ... they just want to be practical and not complicate their teaching."
> Staff, university volunteer programme, Xavier University

This imbalance in the organisational system can make it difficult for staff to extend a reliable and long-term commitment to communities, particularly when it comes to securing a funding source.

> "If our top managers could understand why volunteering is important in that mechanism maybe we can get regular financial support. One of the problems is we cannot prove necessity on conducting the service."
> Staff member, volunteer programme, BISU

We found examples where inadequate funding affected the quality of interventions. For example, the social work student from Australia in our research team noted that the reading materials used by volunteers to enhance literacy were not age-appropriate. The volunteers themselves expressed concern about the progress they were making because the children were displaying multiple behavioural problems which they had not anticipated. They felt out of their depth when it came to managing this behaviour but had not received specific training or guidance to respond to these challenges.

Heavy administrative requirements

Policies and procedures differ from university to university. but we found examples where the process of engaging with communities beyond the campus boundary triggers a sequence of paperwork that needs to be completed by staff and students (see Story 1 for an example). The time commitment this requires increases the transaction costs of volunteering within universities, and the uncertainty that everything will get approved is difficult to harmonise with arrangements made with communities.

Story 1:
Drowning in paperwork

Volunteering is not easy work at university. At BISU, staff have to write a letter seeking permission from the Campus Director, who could deny their request. Students have to get the signatures of the Campus Director, the Dean and the Faculty Directors in subjects that will be affected by their absence in class. These individuals are not always on campus. Then they have to prepare a waiver form to seek permission from the Mayor at the Local Government Office. It costs each student 50 pesos to get this notorised (which is equivalent to two meals for most students). On top of the 50 pesos they also have to pay for their transport and food while out in the field.

Volunteers depicted the administrative and financial burdens as rocks in their rivers of experience, acting as barriers and difficulties.

The teachers also find these requirements a barrier. That is why some of them only opt to go out into the field once or twice a semester.

The university as a revered institution

Universities are well respected in communities, and this comes with a lot of power on the part of the universities in the relationship they form with people's organisations, associations or barangays.

On commenting how receptive communities seem to be with volunteers from universities and whether this willingness is a precursor to dependency, a photographer with us on a visit to Legazpi responded,

> "The thing is that the students come from the school and they respect the school and that transfers to the students. This is why they accommodate the students ... it's reverence rather than dependency."

In the eagerness of universities to set up projects and acquire the necessary paperwork, it is not uncommon for new initiatives or projects to go through the motions of developing memoranda of agreement (MOAs) without respecting or incorporating the community's knowledge or priorities, as this excerpt from a discussion with a different community in Bohol reveals:

> - Community: "We usually accept the projects but when we see the agreement it could be different."
>
> - *Valuing Volunteering*: "Have you ever made any amendments to Memos of Agreement (MOAs)?"
>
> - Community: "We can't really change the MOA because they have made it."
>
> - *Valuing Volunteering*: "Can you see an advantage to writing the MOA together?"
>
> - Community: "This is better. So we can share."
>
> - *Valuing Volunteering*: "Share what?"
>
> - Community: "Like what kind of proposal."

The problem is that volunteering is not intrinsically benevolent. The relevance of taking into account community realities in designing volunteering interventions is revisited in the following subsection.

Summary of implications:
Features of the university system limit the effectiveness of volunteer programmes

- Achieving positive outcomes for both students and communities is not easy.
- University volunteer programmes do better at providing avenues for students to develop their skills and dissertations than affecting change for communities.
- To be an effective tool for development, attention needs to be given to organisational drivers of negative outcomes at the community level.

Strategies for increasing a community focus in university volunteering programmes

It always seemed to be the case that those spearheading volunteer and extension programmes had a challenging time navigating institutional constraints to convince staff and students to engage in community work and to do so meaningfully. Universities trying to tackle this head-on emphasised social justice as a strong institutional value, as with Ateneo universities and Miriam College. Bicol University operationalised a commitment to community development in its strategic plan for 2003–13. Strategies for increasing a community focus involved hiring staff with community development expertise, collaborating with community-level partners like NGOs and training and orientation for staff and student volunteers.

It was found that in certain cases, volunteer interventions were not tangible to the community. For example, it is not always clear to communities why representatives from the university are even there.

> **"We thought the students were sent here with trying to invite people to study at BU. But little did we know that they were here to help us."**
> Community member, Legazpi

When the benefits of volunteer action are not tangible to the community, they can perceive their engagement with students as a duty and not necessarily an exchange they are benefiting from. Many participants talked about the risk that the community feels like a 'social laboratory'.

> **"When you do all this stuff, the significant learning that I have is when you interview an older adult and they tell you that they don't want to be interviewed anymore, because so many people have come already, and it really breaks my heart."**
> Student volunteer, Xavier University

Some universities were trying to elevate community change as a focus in their volunteering programmes. At Miriam College the balance between student and community impact was described as a 'fusion', which connects academic learning to what that knowledge can contribute to welfare. It was described as outcomes-based learning. Xavier University recognised that while it remains a challenge to move beyond a 'do no harm' approach to one that proactively harnesses volunteering as a tool for development, it is a missed opportunity not to. This was expressed to us clearly by Kristohanong Katilingban sa Pagpakabana (KKP) and students at Xavier University, where alignment of learning outcomes and community development outcomes was a big priority.

The Director of KKP, the social involvement office, explained that students have to practise certain techniques, like geographic information system (GIS) mapping. Every semester a new set of students will go and measure the same football field. Why not use that course requirement to create knowledge that is valuable to people, like farmers?

> **"We have to expand the classroom to include communities as part of the whole."**
> Director of volunteer programme, Xavier University

Other students told us about doing water analysis with victims of a typhoon Sendong. Instead of it being a purely academic exercise they can determine whether the water communities are drinking is safe. In Xavier University one of the forerunners of service learning is the chemistry department.

> **"We are pushing for green chemistry ... the department can work with the community to create the impact."**
> Chemistry student, Xavier University

We collected a number of ideas for increasing a community focus in university volunteering programmes.

Hire staff with community development expertise

Being able to work in a way that benefits the community requires a certain level of expertise, both in theory and practice. These are not always skills held by teaching staff. Some of the bigger volunteering departments have responded to this gap by recruiting staff with NGO and community organisation experience. The result is that the stewards of volunteer programmes have a community perspective as well as a teaching one. While it can be difficult for universities to attract people with this experience, it can make a big difference. The social work department at Bicol University was particularly interesting because both staff and students had been schooled in development principles "like self-determination and community participation" and these had informed their entire approach from engagement through to placement review. Many of the staff had previously worked for NGOs (see Story 2).

> **Story 2:**
> **Building from community development principles**
>
> The Department of Social Work (DSW) at Bicol University (BU) works with a few communities at a time. Communities are selected based on a set of criteria: economically depressed, no access to basic services, a willingness to partner with BU, and no serious peace and order problem. Through the student volunteers, DSW conducts socio-economic profiling.
>
> Meetings between community representatives, faculty and volunteers also take place to discuss plans. During this phase they are able to establish if the DSW has to bring in expertise from another college or department, such as when one community expressed a need for technology transfer on organic farming or when conflict resolution is needed.
>
> Once the community needs are determined and areas of engagement decided, the DSW and the partner community, NGO or Local Government Unit (LGU) signs a memorandum of agreement to formalise a partnership. The partnership is often for a period of five years. As students come and go, it is faculty staff who play an important role in developing and maintaining the relationship.

Collaborate with community partners

Some university departments join efforts with NGOs or LGUs, who are considered closer to the needs of the community.

> **"Community organising is not our expertise so it is how we work with other stakeholders."**
> Director of a volunteer programme, Xavier University

This makes it possible for universities to leverage their strength – a pool of volunteers with technical expertise – into existing community development projects. One example of this is the partnership between KKP at Xavier University and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). In fact the Director of KKP used their contract with CRS to create opportunities for student volunteering.

Tap other departments for expertise when the need arises

To stay true to community concerns, volunteer work may take students and faculty beyond their academic comfort zone. The four communities we spoke to who are working with volunteers from BISUon a government (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources)-funded mangrove rehabilitation programme all reported mangroves being cut down. One community didn't actually understand the long-term benefits of mangrove planting themselves, and even hinted that it was they who cut down the mangroves. The other communities expressed concern about the lack of security for the protection of mangroves, as some of the people cutting them down are armed.

At our multi-stakeholder reflection meeting, it was mentioned by a community member that maybe the root cause of the problem should be addressed: the fact that those that are cutting the trees need the money straight away and are often informal settlers.

> **"Our organisation has a plan to secure a settlement along the swamp land. Our problem is how to secure a special land use permit to establish settlement, in this way we can help prevent the illegal cutting of trees. Because 100% of members will help in the protection. If only we are allowed to establish settlements we can help minimise the illegal cutting of trees."**
> Community member, Bohol

This quote demonstrates that possible solutions extend beyond the remit of specific university departments. In this case, environmental concerns are entwined with social and political issues, which are not the specialism of staff or student volunteers on the BISU campus we visited.

In Story 2 the DSW learned there was a genuine need for technology transfer on organic farming in one of the communities with which it was working. This expertise was not held by people within the department. However, they were in a position to use their professional networks within and beyond the university campus to identify willing collaborators.

Develop an overarching community outreach strategy that aligns with university goals

It can become easier to embed a community focus into volunteering programmes when doing so contributes to other university goals. At Bicol University they integrated community development goals into strategic plans, paving the way to legitimising and encouraging a community outcomes-focused approach. At Xavier University, the work of the volunteer programme is aligned to five thematic agendas of the University: food security; good governance; health and sanitation; environment; and peace.

Training and orientation for staff and student volunteers

Some of the bigger volunteering programmes are positioning themselves as a hub, which can provide training to volunteers in other faculties or departments of the university. The Ugnayan ng Pahinungod programme at UP Los Baños recently developed a training programme to capacitate more than 200 student-led organisations on campus who engage in volunteering activities.

The three-tier volunteer development training programme – beginner, immediate and advanced – aims to capacitate students to do volunteering as well as spearhead volunteering for development initiatives that extend beyond 'handing out lunch boxes'.

The training is experiential, providing students with an opportunity to engage with sectors on a short, one-time intervention (e.g. conduct of training programmes), a short-term continuous engagement (e.g. the summer Affirmative Action Programme) or a minimum two-week intervention (e.g. immersions in the community). The idea is that they use these experiences to inform their own community-based actions.

Summary of implications: Strategies for increasing a community focus in university volunteering programmes

- Universities need to develop and test strategies that can balance the rhythms of university life with the realities of community life.
- The softer skills that can build trust and unlock community potential are underrepresented in service learning and volunteer initiatives. They require training and practice to develop, even among the most experienced academics.
- Strategies for increasing community focus in university volunteer programmes combined community level coordination and collaboration with professional networks to tap relevant expertise, which provided a flexibility to incorporate community priorities into programme design.

A failure to learn about what works prevents improvement and excellence in volunteer programme design

Community development work is complex and does not follow a fixed trajectory. A lot of volunteering is iterative and experimental in nature, making it a natural accompaniment to social change work. People work with their best intentions and resources to try and solve an issue or problem. They give things a go but there is little follow-up on the part of volunteers or volunteer programmes to check on the changes that have occurred in the lives of people living in poverty. Most of the universities we engaged – and which we would consider in large part to be front-runners in the sector – highlighted standardised measurement and evaluation as a challenge area in reflection sessions. Limited practice around measuring what has changed for people and communities affects how helpful university volunteering is as a tool for development.

The research explored the sorts of mechanisms in place to prove and improve the contribution of volunteering initiatives to poverty alleviation. But we found little practice around measuring what has changed for people and communities as a result of volunteer programmes in universities. Most of the universities we engaged don't have any community impact tools.

"We still don't have records and mechanism for follow up on the work they do now and their impact in the community with the exposures they get."
Volunteer support staff, Xavier University

"Often times we only focus on the students but not the community. Even with our partner organisations. And even us … We do not capture this knowledge to inform our practice."
Volunteer support staff, Miriam College

The practice of no follow-up is widespread and yet wholly incongruous in institutions whose remit is to cultivate learning and excellence among their constituents. In all our sessions we only uncovered one initiative where a student volunteer took the initiative to follow up on the impact of an activity (see Story 3). Even where data is collected systematically, as with JVP at Ateneo, there is so much of it that time is not found in day-to-day operations to analyse it and look for patterns about how volunteering is leading to change. In the worst-case scenarios this trend means activities that serve no wider social, environmental or economic benefit are repeated without review or adjustment. The use of volunteers in the National Greening Programme is one example. We have talked to lots of different community members about the efforts of young people through NSTP and school volunteering. Their view is that efforts are frequently wasted. Students don't know how to plant properly. The trees are planted in poor locations. Cows eat the trees. Or they get flooded before they can grow strong. In other situations the work of volunteers (e.g. planting mangroves) is undone by wider community dynamics (e.g. which proliferate mangrove cutting).

When impact is not assessed, it can limit how volunteering programmes communicate to donors, campus directors, the potential constituency of volunteers (faculty and students) and community partners about the benefits. This can threaten the sustainability of programmes, both in terms of the supply of material and human resource.

Story 3:
What did happen next?

During one of our discussions about the impact of volunteer efforts, one student volunteer at Xavier University contributed the following story. He was unique in demonstrating an active commitment to follow-up.

"When I was in UNITAS (a council for arts and sciences students), there was a project about tree growing to assess if the trees were growing. During floods and rain the trees were washed out. I was shocked bakit nagging ganito [why this happened]. It's not just implementing the things that you want but looking at the wider perspective of what's happening next. Your efforts may be significant to you but what about the community? Because of that I was a bit dismayed. You buy the trees you take pictures and documents. And suddenly it's lost. The efforts are maybe wasted."

Valuing Volunteering: "Did they try to plant more trees? Or give up?"

Volunteer: "Actually that was monitoring of trees planted by NSTP students."

Valuing Volunteering: "What was the inspiration for monitoring?"

Volunteer: "Not just going to the communities but making a difference. The reason why we planted is to prevent landslides. They planted trees on the riverbanks. When the landslides even a little the bamboo trees were washed away".

In most cases, capacity to identify outcomes and associated indicators as well as document stories of change is limited. Architectures for learning about impact have not been developed. Many staff supporting volunteer programmes are teachers or practitioners in community work. Understandably, they do not always have the same passion for research, evaluation or writing to capture change. This is not to conclude that the sector is starting from zero. There are some good practices in evidence which university volunteer programmes could build from.

We found examples of volunteer programmes combining a values-based approach with reflection sessions. At Bicol University, volunteers were provided a mentor to discuss what is working and what is not. JVP runs volunteer reflection sessions so they can assess their volunteer journey both in terms of its direction and achievements. But we could not find examples of an equivalent systematic reflection process developed for the community. Xavier University did involve community participants in an annual celebratory summit to showcase the outputs of service learning projects, which seems to be a significant step in the right direction. But even one of their partner communities spontaneously commented how they enjoyed contributing their ideas and feedback in the inquiry sessions run by this project because usually they are just asked to answer surveys.

At Miriam College a staff volunteer suggested that, to keep it simple, efforts should be assessed against three objectives:

1) **to equip** the community with something they want and something they are able to apply
2) **to nurture** by sharing values, forming relationships with the community and supporting sense of belongingness
3) **to develop** some change that results in a better life.

A clear lesson of this research is that in seeking to figure out what is working and what needs improving, there is no substitute for talking to the people whose lives are directly affected by volunteer actions. This includes the community. An impact cannot truly be validated if it is not reported as a direct experience of those involved. This is where multi-stakeholder spaces that support conversations between all the actors involved become particularly valuable. This means that everyone is inputting, learning and owning the success and failures of the effort.

Summary of implications:
A failure to learn about what works prevents improvement and excellence in volunteer programme design

- When learning about impact does not take place, volunteering becomes a mindless activity of mobilising human resources rather than a strategic tool for purposeful change. Therefore, there is a need to identify and make use of more tools to assess the community's experience.
- Without space for reflection on the assumptions that are made in the design of volunteer projects or the wider factors affecting the trajectory or sustainability of volunteer efforts, we miss valuable information that could help university volunteer programmes to either do things better or do better things.
- To figure out what is working and what needs improving there is no substitute for talking to the people directly affected by volunteer actions. Volunteer programmes need to create regular spaces for reflection between all actors involved, primarily the community.
- There is an urgent need to develop and strengthen tools, frameworks and processes within university volunteer programmes so their contribution to poverty alleviation and sustainable development can be systematically assessed.

The relationship between volunteer mobilisation and active citizenship

Impacting poverty via improving levels of active citizenship is a more indirect route to development but it was a central tenet of the sector's theories of change about how university-led volunteering contributes to poverty alleviation (see Figure 5). If it elevates levels of active citizenship, then volunteering shapes a social context populated with more individuals – especially educated ones – who have awareness and concern for issues of poverty alleviation and social justice.

This section looks at what we learned about the links between volunteer opportunities, future active citizenship and poverty alleviation.

For the purpose of this study, agency is defined as the capacity of a person to make choices and act in the world. There is a distinction between unconscious, involuntary behaviour and intentional action where the person demonstrates a control or guidance over their own behaviour.

There is a distinction between unconscious, involuntary or coerced behaviour and intentional action where the person demonstrates a control or guidance over their own behaviour. We found the relationship between mobilising people to volunteer and active citizenship is not straightforward. It is more than possible for students and faculty staff to go through the motions of community engagement activities to meet formal curriculum and institutional requirements or informal expectations of others without the accompanying spirit of volunteerism. This mindless or 'empty' volunteering misses an emotional and intellectual connection to the change process. It can affect volunteer motivation and community willingness to persist with development concerns.

To do is not always to understand

"You can volunteer without being that mindful of the community."
Student, Xavier University

While teachers at BISU were keen to emphasise that doing fieldwork like mangrove planting is part of being a volunteer in the community, the majority of students didn't perceive themselves as volunteers. They explained their engagement was because they were instructed by teachers to go out into the community. The staff were considered to be volunteers. The students thought of themselves as compliant.

A similar divide can be found among academic staff. In response to the enactment of the Volunteer Act in 2007, Bicol University instituted a policy to provide certificates for extension rendered by the staff and faculty. They have found that the points-based incentive is not enough because, by itself, it does not engender the values that need to accompany community engagement work.

To make the human resource of universities go further, and to cement a long-term commitment to community engagement, some universities discussed with us what it would look like to systematically link outreach work to the curriculum. For example, within the chemistry department at Xavier University, service learning has been incorporated into student research projects. This means all 13 students worked with community-level partners in 2013, unlike psychology where just 4 out of 21 students opted for a community focus. The benefit is that a pro-social education with specific community benefits becomes part of the culture, a way of teaching. The potential risk of this approach is that students lose the elective element of working with a community vs a corporate institution like Nestlé. They go through the motions but have not embedded the values that underpin the decision to fuse academic and community outcomes.

Mindless volunteering is a big barrier to cultivating the sort of active citizenship that will contribute to development. If exposure to community work is not combined with an equal commitment to making that work impactful then the message that is being sent to people is that it matters more that you give yourself to helping than what that helping actually achieves. In the best-case scenario, this creates a strange dynamic: a population of people who are keen to help but have no experience or understanding of how to make their efforts purposeful or worthwhile. The resource has been mobilised and is ready to work but the tools and techniques to make it effective are not there. From a change perspective this is limiting. In the worst-case scenario, engaging people in pro-social activities becomes counter-productive because they cannot see what difference their effort is making. In the long run it is liable to result in a complacent rather than active citizenry.

Awakening the spirit of volunteerism

Volunteer platforms can contribute to increasing active citizenship by encouraging a transition between responsive engagement to active engagement in development work. Some people we engaged with characterised this outcome as volunteering becoming 'a way of life'. The Director at Xavier University explained he is looking for the moment when volunteers are,

> "not parroting the words but how they [the volunteers] appropriate the words/values themselves and work for change. This is when I feel a high."
> Director of KKP, Xavier University

The National Service Training Programme (NSTP) is sometimes articulated as a platform for introducing volunteering to people. Some students we spoke to said the only difference between NSTP and self-led volunteering was free will and maintained that the NSTP experience made them hungry to do more. The problem is often that the next opportunity is not waiting for them. Xavier University has created a social formation ladder. At younger ages activity is mandated and universal among all students. But as they progress through the grades, new volunteer opportunities are presented in which students can opt to take part.
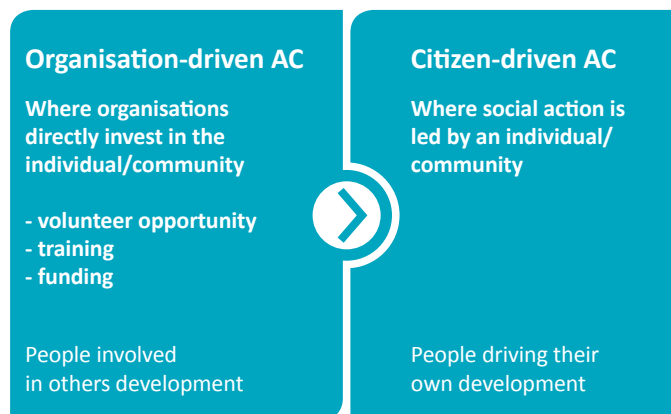
In other universities, the transition was also noted:

> "When the volunteer continues teaching, this is when the river branches off. When they are the one doing the volunteering."
> Staff volunteer, Miriam College

It is summarised in the diagram below. It shows that in the relationship between volunteer platforms and active citizenship, there is a distinction to be made between those opportunities created by a formal institution and those opportunities that people – everyday citizens – seek for themselves (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Distinguishing between organisation-driven and citizen-driven active citizenship (AC)

Organisation-driven AC	Citizen-driven AC
Where organisations directly invest in the individual/community	Where social action is led by an individual/ community
- volunteer opportunity - training - funding	
People involved in others development	People driving their own development

In the first box, the university is directly investing in volunteers through creating volunteers, providing training and even funding. The nature of the volunteer engagement is already defined by the specific project or programme. But the opportunities are important because they can support student initiative, at least to get started. In the second box the volunteer has actively decided which volunteer opportunities provided by the university or another organisation they will give their time to. Or they have started new initiatives based on their own idea of development.

What makes the transition shown by the white arrow possible?

We found that the shift from being involved in volunteering opportunities organised by the university to a more active engagement on the part of the volunteer is affected by the degree of reflexivity an individual or group experiences. Reflexivity refers to the circular relationship between cause and effect, where they both affect one another in a situation. Moving from organisation-driven active citizenship to citizen-driven active citizenship is influenced by what this reflexivity tells volunteers about their actions and wider change in the world.

When we look at the life course of volunteers we notice they often dip in and out of service depending on their motivation and life situation. There are all sorts of transaction costs that limit how much time people can give, like money, family responsibilities, etc. We found that spaces for critical reflection can provide at least two important feedback loops: one that helps volunteers improve the value of their actions and another which results in greater motivation among volunteers to do more.

For KKP at Xavier University, they see their work supporting volunteerism as helping to develop the "students' awareness and concern for the social realities that they may be able to commit themselves to work for changes that will help build more just human structures". This necessarily involves building capacity within students to question the status quo and critically appraise the merits and shortcomings of all actors impacting on development (including the government, civil society and private sector).

Volunteers learn the critical appraisal process by starting with themselves. Regular review and reflection sharpens their ability to anticipate and interpret the relationship between volunteering and social change. The students we met demonstrated excellent capacity for critical thinking, which is testament to the emphasis given at Xavier University to reflexive practice among volunteers. In one observed case a student volunteer took the initiative to find out what happened after volunteering had taken place (see Story 3).

The second feedback loop explains the motivation volunteers get from seeing that their efforts make a difference. It comes from volunteers having a relationship with what they are doing. The effect can be self-sustaining but it requires that volunteer programmes can support volunteers to make these reflections in the first instance,

> **"It is quite a challenge to show to students that there is a different life to the one they are living. It takes a while for them to deal with the contradictions. I ask them to take a look at the children they see from their air conditioned cars."**
> Volunteer support staff, Miriam College
>
> **"If the experience is not processed, then we are limiting the impact of the exposure."**
> Volunteer support staff, Miriam College

On asking some students if they also felt that there was a difference in how they worked when the volunteerism is student-initiated compared to teacher-initiated,

> **"There is a big distinction. Hawthorne effect when there is someone looking at you doing something it affects you but you are motivated. When you initiate it by yourself, there is intrinsic motivation … It is more functional, effective, successful, more of a self-achievement if you do it by yourself."**
> Student volunteer, Xavier University

At the psychological level, we found that the transition is often accompanied by the realisation that volunteering is not self-sacrifice but an activity that is mutually rewarding.

In the case of both feedbacks, the so-called 'tipping point' for volunteers who become convinced by the power of volunteering is not universal. Sometimes exposure to events of different realities is enough.

> **"It depends on the situation and how it impacts on the volunteer. For example I have a concrete experience with student volunteers. After the experience of Hondoy [a severe typhoon] they never left us (until they graduated). They keep coming here. For others it really takes longer for them to have the tipping point. And it also applies for me. After an exposure trip in a fisherfolk community or an Indigenous Persons community I never left. The tipping point is there – it hit here."**
> Staff volunteer, Miriam College

To accommodate the variability in triggers for an active citizenship that is more volunteer-led, Miriam College offers volunteering activities of different commitment levels: community visits; three- to five-day exposures; and immersion where students live with indigenous peoples and fisherfolk. In this way, volunteer platforms are tailored to individual journeys of change.

Summary of implications: The relationship between volunteer mobilisation and active citizenship

- Most volunteering in universities is formally attached to opportunities provided by the institution. There is less of a focus on supporting self-generated activities on the part of student and staff volunteers.
- If volunteering platforms are to nurture active citizens, then they need to support volunteers to feel self-directed and effective in their activities.
- The psychological foundations of active citizenship – e.g. having an emotional as well as an intellectual connection with one's actions in the world – is often overlooked in the design of volunteer programmes.
- Volunteer programmes can support reflexive practice among volunteers, which results in feedback loops that improve the value of activities and the resolve of volunteers to remain active citizens.

The wellbeing experienced by volunteers can affect who gets to volunteer and what kind of contribution they make

Wellbeing is best described as feeling good and doing well. It encompasses the contexts, personal resources, activities and experiences that tell us whether things are going well or poorly. It combines material and structural considerations with the psychological and social factors that support people to do well in life.

The quality of the volunteering experience affects whether volunteers sustain their efforts during and beyond a structured programme. Positive experiences are not necessarily easy experiences. It seems that immersive and long-term commitments are more demanding but also the most rewarding and life-changing, especially when supported through relationships. Negative experiences threaten volunteer wellbeing, especially when underfunded university volunteering programmes drive students into further financial hardship and exclude people from engaging.

Volunteer experiences that support wellbeing

Volunteers at UP Los Baños showed a clear relationship between having a positive experience and eagerness to engage in volunteer work again. One previous volunteer for the programme explained how he had taken up a position in the private sector in agricultural sales following his graduation. He was looking for an outlet so he mobilised colleagues to look for things to do in Bulucan and Pamanga. On days off, they went to cooperatives in the area to give technical assistance on swine and poultry farming.

But what makes for a positive volunteering experience?

We found two factors that make a big difference: the level of immersion of a volunteer experience and the quality of people's relationships, both with the community and with other volunteers.

Across all our engagements with volunteers there was a definite association between level of immersion and level of satisfaction with volunteering. Within the larger group of students at BISU who had only been on fieldwork a handful of times, there was a smaller group of students who had been working weekly with communities in another area of Bohol for about eight months. In contrast, they identified themselves as volunteers, and could speak eloquently to the benefits it had brought them,

> **"The river shows how fruitful my volunteering is in Panglao. Birds, mountains, sun, is very healthy. It has greatly changed my personality. My outlook in life. How nice it was to be a volunteer in a project that you can see will help the community in the future and also yourself. It is hard to learn only in the four corners of the room... It opens up your mind. You are given the confidence to talk to many people."**
> Student, BISU University

The surprising finding is that immersive experiences are not considered easier. They are more challenging for the volunteer. But in the end, they often lead to more rewarding experiences, as this volunteer account illustrates:

> **"It is a river – falingsyasa [it come from] falls. Before I felt discouraged to go here. Natatakotakong I experience ang [I was afraid to experience] community organizing. Kasikumukulo [it's like it's boiling] – it is hot. As time goes by, the current flows easily or continuously. Dati [Before], yungunang time [during the first time] with the community, personally, I'm not good in Bicolano language. For me, it is a challenge. Nahihirapanakomaki-interact sa mga tao [I find it difficult to interact with people] because of language barrier but nasanaynarinako [got used to it]. Parang ang relationship naming with community mas napadalisa akin kasinaka-adapt naako sa language nila [Our relationship with the community improved as I adopted the language]."**
> Student, Bicol University

The aspect of immersion that seemed particularly transformative for young volunteers was overcoming shyness and gaining in confidence. These developments are important for raising levels of active citizenship in a Filipino context, where low confidence feeds inertia. People are afraid to try something new or go out of their comfort zone in case they get it wrong and are criticised. Unless safe spaces are created to practice with a good dose of encouragement it can be preferable for young people not to try.

The value of immersive volunteering seems to be that it creates hands-on experiences that people could learn and grow from:

> **"People really find meaning in the situations they are experiencing. E.g. an exposure in a resource poor community. It is experience based. It is hands on".**
> Staff volunteer, Miriam College

This can affect how the volunteer is able to respond to community needs.
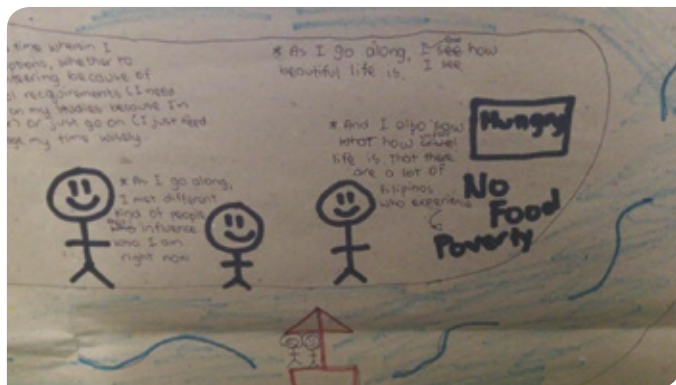
"They learn our ways of living. Most are rich. They are able to experience us. Our poor community. This is important because they can feel how they can help us."
Community member, Lumbia

The quality of people's relationships also affects how volunteers feel about themselves and the work they are doing. On asking why one staff volunteer commits his summer holidays every year to volunteer, he responded,

"It is nice to do something with the same team. You see how hard people are working. It is a small number."

Both the Institutional Network for Social Action (INSA) office at Miriam College and the KKP office at Xavier University were 'buzzy' places. People were coming in and out, with lots of discussion on politics and informal chats taking place. They were 'open houses' or hubs for an active community of volunteers. These felt like places where things happen. The energy was infectious. It was easy to see why people find it rewarding to belong to the volunteer programme.

We also found that over time, volunteers forge a human connection with communities in which they work. When this happens they put more of themselves into their work. The more work they put in, the more socially responsible they feel and the better they do in their studies. The two achievements become mutually reinforcing for a sense of wellbeing (see Story 4).
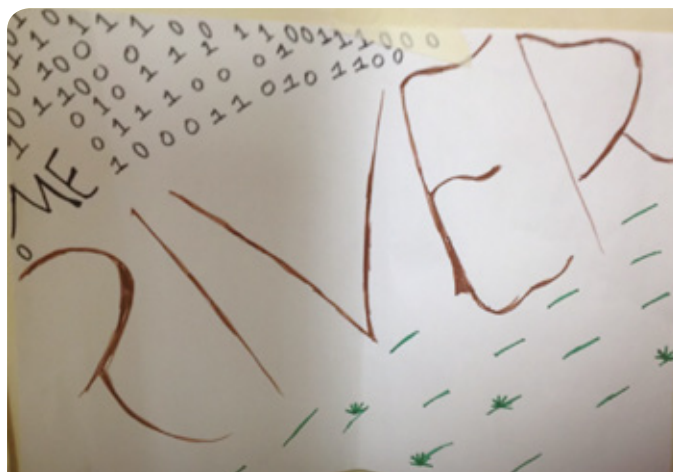
Story 4:
Crossing the river

We met a young man studying computer science at Xavier University who participated in a project run by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to support farmers. CRS had approached Xavier University to provide technical support in designing and setting up a website for a community of farmers in Mindanao. The student describes this experience as a river.

"On one side of the river is me. It has these numbers, binary, because it's what I'm comfortable with … The other side is the outside, and for me the whole other world. KKP introduced me to volunteerism. Back then it was just a thesis … to me I'm going to do a website and graduate."

Then he met the farmers.

'I saw farmers really needing help, I saw government agencies trying to help, and somewhere they just don't connect. I saw how the farmers really needed to bounce back from their current really bad predicaments, because they have no way of competing with the big business farms. One farmer said that he tries so hard to sell his stuff and there are these big guys. I thought that that was unfair, and I saw the government trying to help but there's this disconnect.

"From that day I really started to think that maybe I should stop thinking about myself for a while because their stories really got to me. Now I could really say I really wanted to help. It's opened my eyes to another world I was really happy to see the value. Our website is the first in the Philippines. I really feel happy that I got to know these farmers on a more personal level than a business-centric way. For me that's what opened my eyes to another world. I have actually crossed the river."

On asking what had specifically changed for him through his engagement with the farmers, the volunteer mentioned a few things:

"I didn't expect their level of eagerness and they gave suggestions."

"More empathetic."

"My work is probably more personal. I am putting more of myself into my work now."

Volunteer experiences that limit wellbeing

A problem specific to volunteers in state universities is the financial burden associated with volunteering. It has a negative impact on student and faculty volunteers who themselves come from low-income households (see Story 1). Students have to dig deep into their pockets to cover their transportation and food during volunteer initiatives. In some cases, the faculty ends up paying for the students to travel to the communities. This means that some students are prohibited from volunteering regularly, even if they are eager. This is in contrast to well-funded, immersive programmes which organise accommodation, pay travel costs and include a stipend or volunteer allowance.

Summary of implications:
The wellbeing experienced by volunteers can affect who gets to volunteer and what kind of contribution they make

- Volunteers are more likely to sustain their efforts if they find the experience rewarding, but there is not a straightforward association between volunteering and feeling good about life.
- Surprisingly, the most satisfying volunteer experiences are not easy. They are characterised by challenges that the volunteer has to overcome.
- Immersive and long-term volunteering commitments, which are adequately supported, provide the greatest opportunity for volunteer learning and personal growth.
- Creating space in volunteer programmes for volunteers to spend time interacting formally and informally with each other and with community members extends motivation and attachment.
- Financial considerations can exclude willing volunteers from engaging in development work. This is an issue particular to public universities and underfunded volunteer programmes.
- Ways of supporting the financial and psycho-social wellbeing of volunteers need to be considered in the design of volunteer initiatives at the outset.

One-way relationships slow the change process, excluding a role for community members as active citizens

The relationships volunteers foster with communities can take many forms. In one-way relationships knowledge and resources are imparted to communities instead of co-constructed. One-way giving reinforces the distinction between the 'helper' and the 'helped'. Over time this negatively affects how individuals and communities see their own roles in the change process. When this happens, volunteer initiatives may have added a human resource (in the form of the volunteer's efforts) but they have also taken a human resource away (in the form of the community's efforts). Incorporating a wider definition of 'active citizen' into volunteer programmes, which extends beyond the university volunteer, can help universities extend the impact of their work on poverty.

We learned that when giving is a one-way street it can breed community dependency over time. In a college we visited, connected to our inquiry in Legazpi, *Valuing Volunteering Philippines* asked whether it was an option for youth volunteers to survey school students about what they wanted for their school as a basis for initiating projects,

> **"That wouldn't work here because someone comes and tells us what needs to be done. The ownership is with someone else. But it is a long process to get people to want to work for themselves again, after years of it being done for them.**
> Staff, public college, Libon

The staff member is reflecting that people are not accustomed to the sort of approach that builds from people's capacities to be change agents for themselves. The school students are more used to being told what to do and how to help. The foundations of this dependency can also be found in the relationships university volunteers create with people in poverty. At Xavier University the KKP office staff have recognised the negative impact university volunteers can have when they go into communities as 'professionals' or 'experts' who can fix local problems. Often it can seem as though students and faculty staff speak a different language to the community when they use scientific terms. They now run 'faculty social formation' sessions for faculty staff. This has content on how staff should be with the community, including practical tips on "how to do away with the visitor image" and how to communicate effectively with community members.

In so doing, the training is trying to 'blur the boundaries' between 'professionals' and 'communities', promoting collaborative or distributive leadership that is less reliant on instruction on the part of volunteers and reverence on the part of communities. Instead they are looking to create relationships where different sorts of assets and resources (e.g. technical and local knowledge) are realised through efforts to solve local problems.

In another attempt to change the nature of the relationship between university volunteers and communities, Xavier University has sometimes invited community members to visit laboratories and attend seminars within the university campus. This feels different to the flow of most volunteer placements where volunteers go out to the communities. Through invitations to the university, the community begins to feel comfortable in the environment. It is a resource that they can also make use of. As the volunteers gain a window into the lives of people in poor communities, the communities gain a window into an equally different world. There is reciprocity in this relationship that makes it feel more collaborative and participatory. We saw other examples of volunteer support offices having their doors open to volunteers, who used the space to network, hold film nights and organise campaigns. But it was rare for this resource to be as accessible to community-level partners.

When volunteer initiatives are simultaneously able to create active citizens within volunteers *and* communities, they have just doubled their pool of engaged human resources for sustainable development. As in the example below, the university volunteer ultimately became a local volunteer.

> **"We sent two volunteers to run adult educational classes in Palawan. Through the volunteers and a strong demand from the community they set up a school on the island. The community are funding a local volunteer to supplement the teaching and non-formal education around livelihoods like seaweed production. It is a community-based income that is now funding the volunteer."**
> Director, Ugnayan ng Pahinungod, UP Los Baños

In one instance at BISU, we learned about the power of feedback to the community. Through sharing findings from environmental research the university ensures the community is also learning, which can inform community-held views and perspectives.

> **"In the training (with the community) we compare data with past data that was collected by mentors with us and then differentiate their data with ours and determine what's more effective. We compare growth. If the community can see the effectiveness they will be oh! and later they will be more open-minded".**
> Faculty staff, BISU

Few volunteer programmes seem to have components or strategies to ensure active citizenship on the part of communities is an intended outcome. The above examples were few and far between but they highlighted an important point. The community members are critical to the long-term success of any initiative. As one facilitator of student volunteering commented,

> **"No matter how much we plan there is always a loop hole in the logistics. Sustainability is with the community."**
> Volunteer support staff, BISU

It is the potential to nurture community volunteers that determines if a new idea introduced by a university volunteer receives its important nourishment to grow. Without active citizens in the community, the result is *ningas* cogon, a Tagalog phrase describing what happens when people burn native grass on the land. It goes up in flames, and then … nothing.

Incorporating a wider portfolio of 'active citizens' in volunteer programmes can also help universities extend the impact of their work. Some of the better initiatives worked in depth and for a long period with few communities. This works well for the people living in those communities. But the intensity of the approach means that scope is limited. Some communities miss out. We realised this in an exchange we had with a community in Legazpi. One resident told us that a neighbouring community has asked them how to get students volunteering in their own village. The resident explained they would have to make a request to Bicol University to have activities like them. *Valuing Volunteering* asked of the wider group, "Do you ever conduct echo trainings (trainings on what you have learned) with other *barangays*?" The answer was a resounding no. They share some ideas and knowledge through informal conversations but they do not do peer-to-peer trainings. Then a lady who had attended one of the livelihood trainings jumped in and said "I will teach someone how to make a mat."

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Summary of implications:
One-way relationships slow the change process, excluding a role for community members as active citizens

- The nature of the volunteer relationships with communities determines whether the outcome is dependency or sustainability.
- One-way relationships tend to neglect all the change agents in the picture.
- Two-way relationships are better at supporting active citizens within communities as well as on university campus.
- Universities can extend the impact of their work on poverty and sustainable development when volunteer programmes have components or strategies to ensure active citizenship on the part of communities is an intended outcome.
- Universities can assess capacity within communities for peer-to-peer or mentoring opportunities as a basis for informing decisions about placing volunteers or designing volunteering interventions.

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Revisiting the theory of change

Based on the emerging findings from these inquiries, it is possible to articulate a more nuanced theory of change about the drivers, barriers, enablers and mechanisms which shape the outcomes that contribute to poverty alleviation (see Figure 6).

Black arrows map onto the relationships articulated in the first theory of change. The blue arrows illustrate a reassessment of change trajectories based on the data we collected. While more complex, this theory of change holds clues about ways to enhance volunteering for development within universities and other sectors.

The ultimate outcome of volunteering in this theory of change is articulated as 'pro-poor development'. This is to reflect our learning that poverty alleviation is not always synonymous with national development. In fact, interventions carried out under the aim of national development can exploit and further marginalise the poorest. We found that universities can provide important solidarity and 'symbolic capital' to poor communities they choose to partner with. Their social standing in Filipino society and their security of location makes long-term commitments possible. This unique role echoes the sentiment of 'anchor institutions' gaining in popularity in the USA, where universities, including the University of Pennsylvania, the University of South Carolina and the Cleveland State University are supporting local economies through buying and recruiting from the surrounding area. Going further back in history, these ideas are reminiscent of the Settlement Movement which began in London, UK in 1918. University graduates would go to residences in deprived areas of cities to engage in community-based activities. Some of these settlements exist today as centres of welfare provision and social support.

A revised theory of change informed by the research findings is shown in Figure 6. In the top pathway exploring the direct impact of volunteering on pro-poor development, a combination of non-curricular and co-curricular activities is typically organised around community drivers, which include poverty, natural disasters and lack of skills. Advocacy was added to the activity list. Until we attended Xavier University, advocacy was not mentioned as a key plank of volunteering activity. There is scope to strengthen youth activism on issues affecting people living in poverty, especially if the aim is to cultivate a citizenry capable of critically engaging with more formal and powerful development actors like government and the private sector.

The link between volunteering and change for people living in poverty is not certain. There are a number of barriers that prevent impact. For example, the rhythms of university life often preclude volunteering programmes from increasing a community focus in their work. Research looking at the impact of higher education-led extension work from a community perspective in the USA has arrived at similar conclusions. It has challenged whether partnerships are always mutually beneficial, with common problems including lack of communication between the academe and the community; short timescales; students not there with the right mindset; and lack or orientation or reflection space. Theoretical work to minimise effective and harmful engagements has emphasised a community impact model to service learning, which could be applied to university volunteering programmes. Our research with universities in the Philippines identified a number of strategies which could enable volunteer action to translate into community benefit, including training for volunteers and processes which support all stakeholders – especially community members – to work through what is working and why together.

We found two main ways that volunteering impacted directly on pro-poor development. Volunteers can make tangible improvements to community life through projects that increase economic possibilities, capacities, social capital and wellbeing. They can also shift the social context, making the conditions for a development path that benefits the poorest more viable. The work of university programmes to provide stability and credibility to the concerns of people living in poverty is linked to their potential as 'anchor institutions'. It is these less tangible outcomes that benefit most when volunteers are proactive about using the university networks and reputation to advocate for community needs.
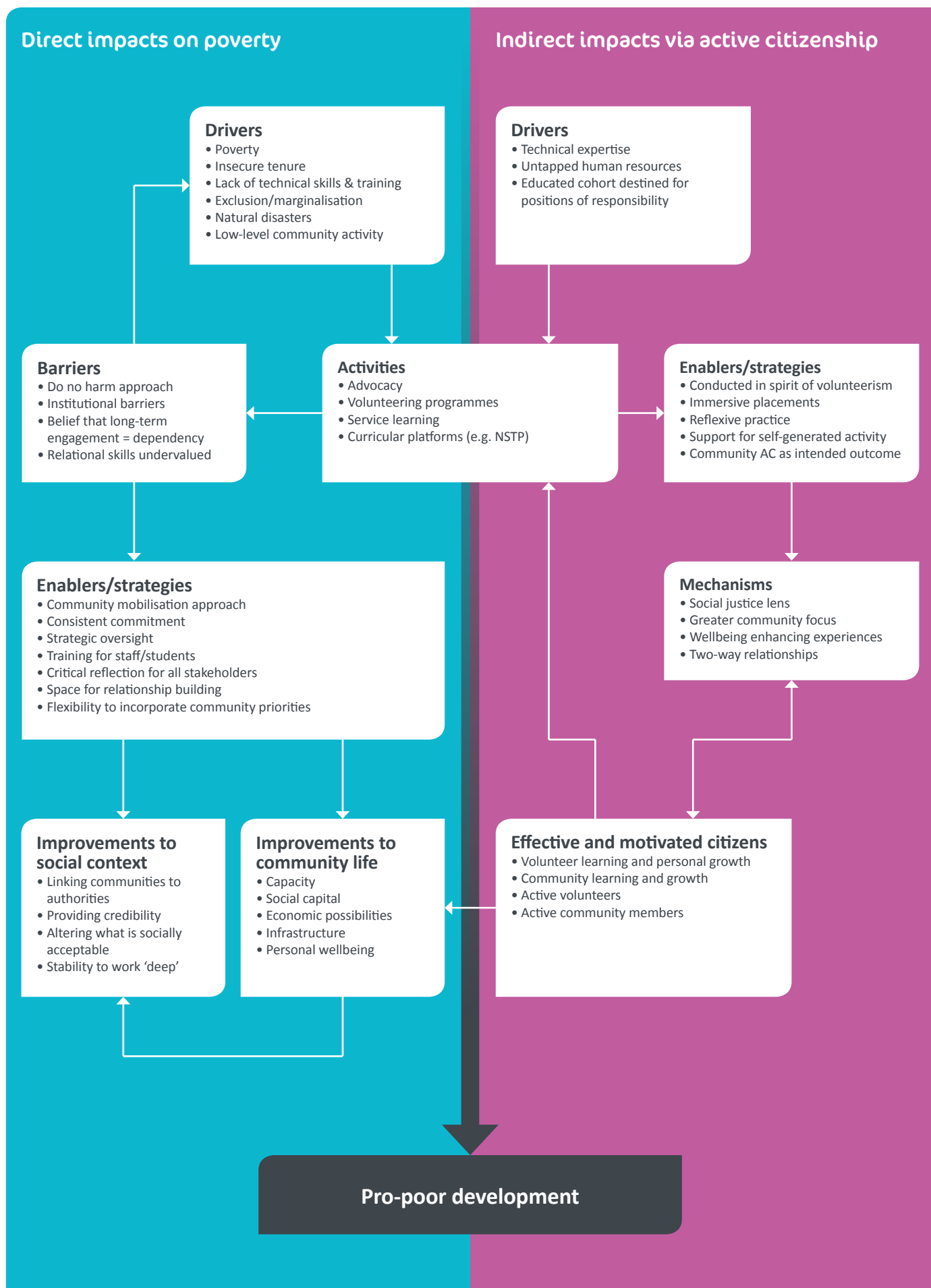
In the bottom pathway (Figure 6: Indirect impacts via active citizenship), the relationship between volunteer engagement, active citizenship and pro-poor development is not straightforward either. To reach a point where volunteer programmes have generated a cohort of effective and motivated citizens, a number of mechanisms need to be in place. These include an approach that emphasises social justice rather than handouts for the poor; greater community focus; wellbeing-enhancing experiences for those involved; and two-way relationships where volunteer and community have the opportunity for personal growth and development.

The research highlighted a number of enabling factors that acted as triggers for these mechanisms, including reflexive practice, immersive placement, support for self-generated activity and encouragement for the principles and spirit of volunteerism to take hold within people. Importantly, the notion of active citizen should not be bounded to the university volunteer. Programmes have more chance of sustaining impact and extending their reach if they also mobilise active citizens within communities to work side-by-side with university volunteers.

Relationships are worth a special mention because they crop up in different places in the theory of change. Space needs to be created for volunteers to build relationships with community members if the transfer of technical knowledge is going to be in any way appropriate and successful. The current tendency within academic settings to undervalue the application of softer, relational skills in community engagement activities is a barrier to change. Without trusting and reciprocal relationships, universities are unable to put to practical use the expertise that gives them the edge in the volunteering for development landscape.

Volunteer–volunteer and volunteer–community relationships are also important for motivating and sustaining the efforts of volunteers. Relationships can be one of the fastest and most infectious ways of creating an emotional connection to the work that one does as a volunteer. They play a major role in determining whether people continue to engage in development efforts after a structured opportunity comes to an end.

Figure 6. A revised theory of change informed by the research findings

Direct impacts on poverty

Drivers
- Poverty
- Insecure tenure
- Lack of technical skills & training
- Exclusion/marginalisation
- Natural disasters
- Low-level community activity

Barriers
- Do no harm approach
- Institutional barriers
- Belief that long-term engagement = dependency
- Relational skills undervalued

Activities
- Advocacy
- Volunteering programmes
- Service learning
- Curricular platforms (e.g. NSTP)

Enablers/strategies
- Community mobilisation approach
- Consistent commitment
- Strategic oversight
- Training for staff/students
- Critical reflection for all stakeholders
- Space for relationship building
- Flexibility to incorporate community priorities

Improvements to social context
- Linking communities to authorities
- Providing credibility
- Altering what is socially acceptable
- Stability to work 'deep'

Improvements to community life
- Capacity
- Social capital
- Economic possibilities
- Infrastructure
- Personal wellbeing

Indirect impacts via active citizenship

Drivers
- Technical expertise
- Untapped human resources
- Educated cohort destined for positions of responsibility

Enablers/strategies
- Conducted in spirit of volunteerism
- Immersive placements
- Reflexive practice
- Support for self-generated activity
- Community AC as intended outcome

Mechanisms
- Social justice lens
- Greater community focus
- Wellbeing enhancing experiences
- Two-way relationships

Effective and motivated citizens
- Volunteer learning and personal growth
- Community learning and growth
- Active volunteers
- Active community members

Pro-poor development

5. Reflections on process

One of the things we hopefully demonstrated to participating universities during these inquiries is that reflection on impact for learning does not have to be an arduous or boring task. We introduced a number of participatory and visual techniques that support people to reflect on what has changed and what difficulties remain (see Methodology). They are easy to run and in two to three days can provide a clear picture of a volunteer programme and its impact, from multiple stakeholders' perspectives.

We received positive feedback on the tools we used. Volunteer support staff saw a lot of value in all coming together to complete the storyboard. It helped them organise their ideas and assumptions about how their projects were leading to change and it brought some of the challenges to the fore. Volunteers enjoyed the opportunity to share the ups and downs of their experiences, and community members liked the opportunity to reflect on their journeys as a community.

The tools are designed to be easy to use. I was able to teach another member of the core research team how to facilitate the sessions over two field visits. The trickiest tool to use is the systems mapping. In order to train people to feel comfortable mapping out issues and connections on a large piece of blank paper, more time is required than we had available to us in the two- to four-day inquiries. We worked collaboratively on some of the processes like listing the key issues, stakeholders and links between them, but members of the project team were uncertain how to construct the map without guidance. It is worth persisting though, because as a feedback and validation tool the maps are very useful. They put all the issues on one (albeit very large!) piece of paper so people can begin to see how all the issues fit together. It usually helps to have someone to guide people through the map to get the discussion started. In the conversation that follows try to answer all the questions that occurred to you in constructing the map.

There is an assumption that reflecting on impact requires a long process of research and reporting that people don't have time for. This depends on what you want the findings for. If the value in the exercise for you is in touching base to learn from people's experiences of how things are going, you can design the reporting process any way that best supports learning for your programme. I maintain that some of the most powerful insights came from making the time to all get in a room together to have a conversation. To navigate potential power dynamics we worked with volunteer support staff, volunteers and community groups separately. It helped us create a space where people could talk freely. Once the findings were anonymised we invited everyone to come together to reflect on them. While this can be more difficult to achieve practically, as there are more diaries to coordinate, we really felt the richest reflections and ideas emerged from multi-stakeholder sessions.

During the research, it was encouraging to hear ambitions among players in the sector for a Learning Hub. This would be an ideal vehicle to promote and up-skill volunteer programmes in how to incorporate participatory and iterative learning processes into their projects. I would recommend train-the-trainer models, as it may be that volunteer programmes benefit most when an 'outsider' (e.g. from another university) helps facilitate the review process. This way everyone, from the director to the community member, can take part.

6. Conclusion

This case study was designed to be a tool for learning rather than a comprehensive evaluation of the contribution university volunteering makes to poverty alleviation. However, this report does indicate the scale of the task at hand if university volunteering is to become a purposeful change tool beyond the university's walls.

The provision of volunteer opportunities does not automatically equate to development impact, either directly through project activities or indirectly via increases in active citizenship, as envisaged in the sector's working theory of change. This case study provides grounded evidence of the myriad considerations that enable meaningful and impactful volunteering, which need to be factored into the design and resourcing of volunteering platforms. No longer can these be glossed over as unanticipated obstacles to achieving development impact or unexpected outcomes of a 'do no harm' approach.

Universities that have found their place in the wider ecosystem of development actors is leveraging their social standing and stability to channel academic expertise into long-term engagements with poor and marginalised communities. This approach is markedly different from single offerings of knowledge, handouts and donations, and it holds greater potential to be transformative for all those involved.

7. Recommendations

This case study reports on key learning about the role of university volunteering in development efforts. This section identifies some key implications and avenues for change, with suggestions aimed at universities, government and the wider sector. They are far from exhaustive but they represent what we believe are the first steps to making volunteering more effective as a development tool. They are intended to encourage debate and stimulate further thinking about the issues explored in the report. They fall into six categories which set out the need to: clarify what the sector is looking for volunteering to achieve, recognise that technical skills transfer relies on quality relationships, improve capacity to learn about impact, increase a community focus in volunteer programmes, work to a broader definition of active citizenship and adequately fund volunteer programmes.

1. Clarify what the sector is looking for volunteering to achieve

Implication

The research has identified a need to clarify what the sector is looking for volunteering to achieve. Poverty alleviation is not synonymous with national development. The objectives of national development schemes often adversely affect the poorest and most marginalised. Is the boundary of impact limited to temporary fixes or a commitment to a social justice? The answer to this question is important because it tells us what sort of progress we should be measuring volunteering programmes against.

Recommendations

- **Philippines National Volunteer Support Coordination Agency (PNVSCA) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) should work with the university sector to develop a road map for university volunteering.**

- **Cross-sector debate should take place about what dependency means in the volunteering for development context.** This research indicates that long-term relationships are not synonymous with over-reliance, and length of engagement should not be used to justify withdrawal of support. Instead, it is the nature of the volunteer relationships with communities, which determines whether the outcome is dependency or sustainability.

- **Universities committed to pro-poor development should take the time to identify the priorities and root causes of community problems, as well as promote consistent commitments over one-time activities.**

- **Universities should be encouraged by PNVSCA and CHED to strengthen the impact of volunteer deployment on poverty alleviation by combining project activities with advocacy to influence decision-makers.**

2. Recognise that technical skills transfer relies on quality relationships

Implication

This case study suggests that the value of university volunteering as a conduit of theoretical knowledge and specialism is only translated into community impact through effective relationships. Without relationships founded on mutual respect, trust and understanding, it is difficult for university volunteers to transfer technical expertise which is appropriate and well received.

Recommendations

- **PNVSCA and CHED should convince leaders in universities about the importance of softer, relational skills for technical development.**

- **University volunteer programmes should think about how to create the space in schedules and orientations to focus on relationship building.** Immersive experiences are more likely to foster personal relationships. Training can support the development of soft relational skills and should be promoted to all volunteers, even the most experienced academics.

- **Recognition should be given to faculty staff (e.g. in performance appraisals, credits) for nurturing effective community relationships that extend beyond any individual placement or volunteer.**

3. Improve capacity to learn about impact

Implication

When learning about impact does not take place, volunteering becomes a mindless activity of mobilising human resources rather than a strategic tool for purposeful change. There is an opportunity to shape monitoring processes in more innovative, less time-consuming ways.

Recommendations

- **There is an urgent need for PNVSCA and CHED to build capacity within the sector to reflect on learning.** This will entail the development of tools, frameworks and processes that can be used by university volunteer programmes to systematically assess and review impact. Universities should be encouraged to test and develop their ideas through experimentation and documentation.

- **Ideas in the sector for developing a Learning Hub that can pool resources, best practice and deliver training to university departments and the wider volunteering sector should be supported by government.**

- **University volunteer programmes need to create regular spaces for reflection, which talk to the people directly affected by volunteer interventions.** At a minimum these spaces need to facilitate conversations between all actors involved, including the community.

4. Increase a community focus in volunteering programmes

Implication

On the whole, university volunteer programmes do better at providing avenues for students to develop their skills and dissertations than impacting on poverty. Academic and communities' priorities need to be balanced by increasing a focus on community impact. This requires a significant shift from focusing on the needs of the student or staff to starting with what the community of actors as a whole wants.

Recommendations

- **PNVSCA and CHED should work with universities to establish a set of tried-and-tested strategies that enable volunteer programmes to balance community concerns with the realities of their institutional contexts.** Work on outcomes-based learning may be an interesting place to start.

- **University programmes need to operationalise mission and vision statements into a set of outcomes with inbuilt flexibility to respond to changing community priorities.**

5. Work to a broader definition of active citizenship

Implication

A lot of volunteering in universities is formally attached to opportunities provided by the institution. These are good platforms for exposure, but by themselves these activities do not guarantee volunteers will continue to be active in development concerns.

Recommendations

- **The university sector needs to promote active citizenship that is self-directed and inclusive.** This involves supporting self-generated activities on the part of student and staff volunteers and ensuring that active citizenship on the part of communities is an intended outcome.

- **The psychological foundations of active citizenship – e.g. having an emotional as well as an intellectual connection with one's actions in the world – need to be factored into the design of volunteer programmes.**

- **University volunteer programmes can support reflexive practice among university and community volunteers,** which results in feedback loops that improve the value of activities and the resolve of volunteers to remain active citizens.

6. Adequately fund volunteer programmes

Implication

Volunteering does not come for free without exploiting volunteers or communities. The research finds that the most satisfying and life-changing experiences are not the easiest. They require adequate financial and practical support.

Recommendations

- **PNVSCA and CHED should commission a review of the funding and resources required to adequately support university volunteering, especially in the case of public universities.** This should account for the ingredients of volunteering programmes that make them effective change tools.

- **Universities should develop protocols to ensure university and community-level volunteers are not being excluded from volunteer work because they do not have access to resources to make a commitment feasible.**

- **University volunteer programmes need to incorporate the time and space needed for volunteers and community members to interact formally and informally with each other into their funding models.**

8. References

For more information on:

The community impact of service learning in USA

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Stoecker, R & E Tyron (2008) "The Unheard Voices: Community organizations and service-learning". Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 12:3: 47.

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Anchor institutions

http://community-wealth.org/strategies/panel/anchors/index.html

The Settlement Movement

http://www.vahs.org.uk/2012/03/settlements-freeman/

PROMOTING ACTIVE CITIZENTSHIP AND VOLUNTEERISM IN PHILIPPINE HEIs

Dr. Patricia B Licuanan (2012), The National Conference on Engaging Academe in Volunteerism (NCEAV)

Legal frameworks in the Philippines

Congress of the Philippines (2007) Republic Act 9418: Volunteer Act of 2007 accessed at http://www.senate.gov.ph/republic_acts/ra%209418.pdf on 7 February 2014.

Proving and Improving your impact using the storyboard (see methods and appendix) and other materials including a Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit

http://www.proveandimprove.org/tools/proveit.php accessed on 24 March 2014.

9. Appendices

1. The universities

This case study is compiled from six interlinked, but distinct, inquiries with universities in the Philippines.

The section provides a short background on the institutional context and volunteer situation for each inquiry. It also outlines the exact methods used with each university.

1. Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation, University of Ateneo, Manila

Institutional context

Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation, Inc (JVPFI) is a community dedicated to the task of nation-building by promoting volunteerism. The community is composed of volunteers, former volunteers and associates. Founded in 1980 by a group of Jesuits who wanted to address poverty and inequality during the martial law era when opportunities for engaging in community development were limited, it was inspired by the US Jesuit Volunteer Corps. In 1995, JVP became independent of the Jesuits and became a foundation. It is still based within the University of Ateneo in Manila.

A typical batch of volunteers comprises 20–40 volunteers placed in communities across Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The programme is currently in its 34th year.

Volunteer situation

The Volunteer Service Programme recruits, trains and places well-educated individuals aged 18–35 to work in under-resourced schools, NGOs, people's organisations, parishes and literacy programmes. Volunteers are considered educators and capacity builders. They work for one year, usually in remote locations in the Philippines. Examples of the sorts of activity they engage in include teaching in under-served areas, training grass-roots community leaders, assisting cooperatives, helping to implement livelihood projects, educate on environmental issues and uphold the dignity of indigenous peoples. Each volunteer placement has an accompanying partner who hosts and supervises the work of the volunteer.

The Volunteer Service programme involves orientation on the core values of the programme: service that builds, solidarity that unites, social justice that empowers, simplicity that frees, and spirituality that loves.

The volunteers receive supervisory visits within the first two months, and an informal phone call to check how things are going. Midway through the programme all the volunteers get together for one week to process their experience and listen to others. In the third quarter there is another supervisory visit, largely based on the partner. A final assessment takes place at the end of the year and a week-long seminar supports volunteers to evaluate their experience and support 're-entry' into their life.

Methodological approach

In July 2012, *Valuing Volunteering* spent an afternoon at JVP offices, discussing the JVP programme and the various pathways that it contributes to development with the Executive Director and two staff members who run the volunteer support programme.

Participants: 3 staff members of JVP.

2. Ugnayan ng Pahinungod, UP Los Baños

Institutional context

Ugnayan ng Pahinungod began in 1994. It used to be a University of Philippines system-wide initiative to support volunteering. The name of the programme refers to selfless service or offering. The flagship programme assigned graduates to far-flung places to substitute under-resourced teaching facilities. In 2000, the programme was devolved into the respective constituent universities so its continuation was reliant on different campuses to allocate funds. Today there are only two programmes in operation, at UP Los Baños and at UP Manila campuses.

Volunteer situation

At Los Baños, volunteer opportunities have focused on education but also agriculture, as this applied science is a specialism of the university. For example, it has received funding from various government offices, such as the Department of Agrarian Reform and a dozen more private institutions, to support agricultural development initiatives.

Over the years, graduate students have volunteered in a number of different educational initiatives:
- to complement elementary education in marginalised areas
- to run leadership and educational training for high school students to help prepare them for college life
- to teach on the Reading Enhancement and Appreciation Development (READ) programme, which is designed as a 16-week structured non-formal school intervention for primary school students.

Undergraduate students can also realise their volunteering commitment through one of 200 student-led organisations. The activities of these organisations typically involve donating goods (e.g. following a pencil drive on campus) or sponsoring parties/events in schools and communities. These organisations are supported by Ugnayan ng Pahinungod through the provision of leadership, team building and training on how to understand a community.

Methodological approach

In July 2012, *Valuing Volunteering* interviewed the Director of Ugnayan ng Pahinungod. In early September, *Valuing Volunteering* revisited the office to run a participatory session with six volunteers and staff (all of whom had been volunteers previously).

Later, in September 2012, the programme celebrated its 18th anniversary and *Valuing Volunteering* was invited to speak as part of a celebration event, "Engendering a Culture of Volunteerism in the National State University". At this event, *Valuing Volunteering* was able to meet with other faculty staff who supported volunteering at UP Los Baños.

Participants: a group of 8 staff and volunteers.

3. The Social Work degree programme, Bicol University

Institutional context

The Social Work programme at the Daraga campus of Bicol University (BU) in Legazpi was ranked the best social work degree in the Philippines for 2011. As part of the programme, students are sent out to work in the community in the second semester of their final year as part of their field practice. This is a compulsory part of the course, but the students elect whether they work for NGOs, LGUs, or live and work within the community for three months.

The fieldwork component of the degree is often supplemented by other extension activities of the school which range from technical assistance and capacity building for farmers to food-processing seminars to mothers and tutorials for school children, particularly in the nearby Mabini and Burgos communities, which were visited as part of this research.

Since 1995 BU has already sent more than 700 volunteers to different communities and agencies, both government and NGOs. Of this total, 60 volunteers from the Department of Social Work were placed in Barangays Bugos and Mabini in Daraga, Albay.

Volunteer situation

The roles of students vary according to the community context. They are encouraged to spend the first month of their three-month placement immersing themselves in community life so they can be responsive to local priorities. In the latter months their involvement in development can range from opening up opportunities for additional sources of income, creating opportunities to improve the relationship between communities and local government (e.g. through inviting officers to give trainings identified by residents), facilitating new projects and advocating for better services.

A major role of faculty staff has been to build and sustain relationships with communities, to represent a longer-term commitment than the regular ebb and flow of students can provide. In some cases, this commitment has lasted 10 years. They consider this engagement volunteer work, as it often incurs longer work hours and financial resources to cover transportation costs.

The DSW follows a deliberate process, from identifying external partners and their needs, to student volunteer placement and monitoring and reflection process. In cases where the DSW identifies community needs that are outside their purview they link up with other colleges, such as in areas of agriculture. Although the fieldwork is a course requirement, the students are called volunteers; so are the faculty members and/ or staff engaged in extension service.

Methodological approach

The NCEAV research team visited the Daraga campus in Legazpi. Our starting point was a focus group discussion with faculty members. With students, we used "rivers of experience" visual techniques to make sense of their journey and we pieced together storyboards of volunteer activities, outputs and outcomes.

We spent the whole day visiting and working with two communities – Mabini and Burgos – which the Department of Social Work has been working with for some time. We ate with them. We observed how they interacted with faculty staff. We saw the outputs of some of the livelihood projects. We used drawing to explore how the communities had changed from the past to the present. And we discussed where communities wanted to be in the future. We mapped out contributions using 'the buko pie of effort' and we discussed what it was like working with students and staff.

We took a visit to nearby Libon to join a college volunteering initiative where teaching students volunteer to provide reading support to children falling behind in literacy at a nearby school. We ran Paint Us a Picture with the children and a focus group discussion with the volunteers. We facilitated feedback from the students to the volunteers about the difference their activities were making and observed the reading sessions.

Participants: 3 staff members; 8 volunteers; 20 community members; 29 college students; 32 elementary school children.

4. Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Bohol Island State University (BISU)

Institutional context

In 1997, Bohol Island State University (BISU) separated research and extension into two distinct units. The role of the extension office is primarily to support other departments in their various fieldwork activities.

A major extension programme of BISU is the promotion of Philippine Aquasilviculture, which aims to protect and restore habitats for fisheries and aquatic resources. The project, which is part of the national government's initiative through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED), is implemented in partnership with 61 other universities. It aims to plant mangroves for rehabilitation of the offline shores, establish a multi-species hatchery and develop 100 techno-demo aquasilva farms in coastal areas.

Under the project, BISU has been commissioned to plant 55 hectares of mangroves in the province.

Volunteer situation

BISU students and faculty members are mobilised for training, community development activities, linkages and partnership building and the development of IEC materials. Student fieldwork happens once or twice a month to support and learn mangrove management techniques. This typically takes place at two sites – Panas and Candijay, which both form part of the Carood watershed.

Some students are also volunteering for longer periods on a separate project in a touristy area of Bohol called Panglao. They work with the local community and dive shops to replant the coral that has been destroyed in the area. They also educate local people as well as local and foreign-owned businesses on how to protect the area.

Methodological approach

The NCEAV research team visited the Candijay campus of BISU in February 2013. We carried out one-on-one interviews with faculty staff heading up the extension programme and volunteer support.

We visited three different communities and People's Organizations to talk with local officials and community members in Barangay Halls and people's homes. We went with one community to see a mangrove-planting site. We explored, through drawing, the past, present and future of what life in their communities and engagement with student volunteers is like. We began to build a picture of the social issues of the community so we could see how BISU and its volunteers fit in. Contributions to community development were mapped using the 'buko pie of effort'.

We created "rivers of experience" with student volunteers engaged in two different programmes to explore their perspective.

As a research team we then created one map of the issues and their interconnections and presented this back to BISU faculty staff and community representatives. This was an important step of our validation process.

Participants: 18 students; 36 residents across three communities; 3 faculty staff; one multi-stakeholder session with 7 participants.

5. Kristohanong Katilingban sa Pagpakabana (KKP), Xavier University

Institutional context

The Kristohanong Katilingban sa Pagpakabana (KKP) is a component programme of the Research and Outreach Centers of Xavier University (XU) established in 1980 as the Social Involvement Office. Its current name is the local translation of Christian Community for Social Awareness, which refers to the spirit of Jesuit education that seeks to elevate student awareness and commitment to social change.

It was started because of staff's belief that XU had a role to play in social justice and addressing the needs of the community. KKP envisions "a sustainable Mindanao that is food secure and climate resilient where XU graduates take active participation and leadership roles given their various fields of expertise". It upholds the mission "to lead the students and faculty to be engaged in the outreach initiatives of the Development Goals of Xavier University." The work of KKP is aligned to five thematic agendas of the University: food security; good governance; health and sanitation; environment; and peace.

Volunteer situation

Students and staff can get involved as volunteers through a number of different initiatives:

1. Service Learning, where students engage directly with communities or agencies as part of the curriculum.

2. Issue Advocacy, where students engage in a process of social situation analysis and concrete action responses. This often comprises campaigning for social justice.
3. Community Development Programmes, where exceptional students and staff lend technical expertise.

4. PEACE Project, funded by Childfund Japan has been helping 250 children and their families for 10 years. Different sets of student volunteers are sent to these barangays every year to support literacy and educational attainment.

5. XU Farm Project, funded by US Catholic Relief Services (CRS). An example of a project was the development of a text message service for farmers to inform them about weather and fluctuations in market prices for produce.

Methodological approach

The NCEAV research team visited the university campus at Cagayan de Oro for three days in February 2013. Out first engagement was with student volunteers. They explained to us the ladder of opportunities available to students via co-curricular and non-curricular activities and shared some candid experiences about the challenges and successes of student volunteering.

We were invited to a 'noise barrage' to witness the advocacy programme in action. We worked with faculty staff to construct a detailed storyboard of the programme components, the outcomes, enabling conditions and difficulties.

Cagayan de Oro was in the midst of a series of fatal attacks on residents in the run-up to local elections. Bomb squads were in force in the hotel we stayed at. For reasons of safety, Xavier University advised that we do not visit the communities. Instead they invited members to our session within the university campus. We ran the participatory drawing session with members from two different communities to learn and share about their experience working with XU students, exploring what a future without XU looked like for them.

As a research team we compiled a systems map to plot the issues and their connections. Lastly, we had a feedback session with staff to present a map of the issues, reflect on the storyboard and discuss ideas further. Community members were invited but understandably they could not attend a session within the campus a second time the same week.

Participants: 12 academic staff working at the KKP office; 6 student volunteers; 11 community members from Barangay Macasandig and Barangay Lumbia; activists at the noise barrage.

6. The Institutional Network for Social Action (INSA), Miriam College

Institutional context

Miriam College is a private university, which engages in community service work to contribute to development goals. The university's centre for volunteerism and social development is INSA, which runs a number of different volunteer programmes.


Volunteer situation

As a volunteer at Miriam College there are a number of opportunities available. The Lingap Bulilit programme partners with local government units and NGOs to provide quality early childhood education in village day care centres. The aim is to upgrade the competencies of day care teachers and build the capacity of parents to be partners in education. Recent graduates and alumni can volunteer with Miriam Volunteer Mission, which deploys volunteers for six months to one year to resource-poor communities all over the Philippines. It is now in its tenth year.

Teacher volunteers can take part in *Gurong Lingkod* (literally "servant teacher"), using their expertise or core competency to teach in resource-poor communities during the summer break. Volunteer numbers have increased from 4 in 1999 to approximately 100 a year, deployed to different parts of the country and in some cases abroad.

Methodological approach

Valuing Volunteering visited the campus of Miriam College for two days in October 2013. We worked with staff at INSA to run the storyboard exercise. We met student volunteers and learned about their volunteering journeys through river of experience. The pictures were presented as a gallery to adult volunteers who reviewed the exhibits and spoke to their experiences by selecting a picture that resonated with them. The following day we met two different communities, living in informal settlements within walking distance of the office on campus. We talked about how their communities had changed over the years. We mapped contributions using the 'buko [coconut] pie of effort'.
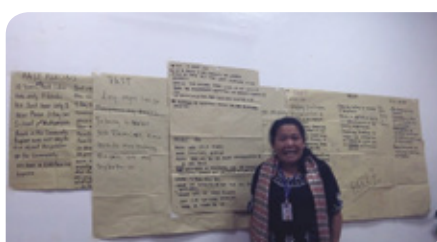
Participants: 7 INSA staff; 12 student volunteers; 7 staff volunteers; 7 community representatives; a mixed stakeholder session of 7 participants involved in previous sessions.

2. Research materials

Building a storyboard around what changes and why

The table below outlines the eight questions we used to support the storyboard activity. They have been adapted from a toolkit provided by the New Economics Foundation, which can be found at http://www.proveandimprove.org/tools/proveit.php.

Questions	Prompts
What is the context in which you are working or living that means you can see the value in volunteering/service learning/ extension?	You could describe your own **personal situation** as well as the **need** that you hope your efforts will address.
What are the activities and actions that you have been doing?	These could include project planning, obtaining resources and involving people in different ways as well as delivering the physical elements of a project.
What initial results (changes) did you see once these activities and actions began and your volunteering/service learning/extension work was underway?	Changes could be in the attitudes and behaviour of people affected by the project, as well as more visible, physical changes to the area. Change could have taken place at the personal, organisational or community level.
What *medium-term* changes have you seen/do you expect to see as a result of the volunteering/service learning/extension work? What long-term changes do you expect to see as a result of the volunteering/service learning/extension work?	You could define 'medium-term' as 6 to 12 months and define 'long-term' as beyond 12 months from the project's start date. However, this of course depends on the nature of your volunteering/service learning/extension work. Ultimately the fifth box of the flow diagram (see Figure 1) will be describing something closest to the **vision** for the project. At this stage focus on positive changes – but make a note of potential negative effects as part of question 8 below.
How do the initial results (in box number 3 on the flow diagram – see Figure 1) lead to the medium-term changes that you identified in Question 4 above? How do the medium-term changes (in box number 4) lead to the longer-term changes that you identified in Question 5 above	Questions 6 and 7 present an opportunity to explore the assumptions that have been made that one change will automatically lead to another. To test the assumptions about those changes you need to be clear what else needs to happen or be part of the experience to make it so. For example, just achieving a qualification may not be enough to ensure people get a job – perhaps some additional intervention, such as guidance on how to prepare for a job interview is needed to make this more likely to happen. You may also want to consider what makes you effective in your volunteering/service learning/extension work. So try and describe precisely how each of the more immediate changes will lead to further changes in the future or for a wider group of people. Sometimes asking 'Why is that important?' of each thing you mentioned in response to questions 3 and 4 can help with this.
What barriers have you come across in implementing the actions or activities, and what might prevent the positive changes you have identified from coming about?	This question is a useful opportunity for thinking through any difficulties you have encountered. These could be personally, organizationally or within the community. To help answer this question, you may wish to think about advice you would give to someone else about to start with volunteering/ service learning/extension work.

Table 3: Guiding questions for inquiries 3–6

Building block	Question
Community	
Qualities of interactions with volunteers	• How do you feel when interacting with the volunteers? • Do you feel more able or less able to solve community issues?
Immediate/tangible changes	• What changed for you? • What changes have you seen in others?
Feelings of connectedness and support within the community	• Do you feel more connected and supported as a community? • Do you feel you have stronger links to outside support?
Qualities of a good volunteer	• What makes a good volunteer? • Are students professional?
Length of stay/ engagement	• Would you like them to stay longer, shorter or do they stay the right amount of time? • Why is that?
Relationship with the academe	• What is your impression/view of X? • Do the academe consult you before they send students to the community? • What words/colours would you use to describe your relationship with the X?
Sustainability of the impact	• What do you think the volunteers get out of it? • What are the benefits for you?
Mutuality of benefit	• What do you think the volunteers get out of it? • What are the benefits for you?
Academic staff	
The reasons they send volunteers out to the community	• What triggered you/your colleagues in setting up or getting involved with HEI-led volunteering? • Why should faculties use service learning/volunteering in their classes/to supplement classes? • What is the local/policy context that convinced you of the value of HEI-led volunteering? • Were there any particular community issues/needs/gaps in services that motivated you to take action?
Supporting volunteer activity	• What were the specific activities/actions undertaken to set up HEI-led volunteering (e.g. strategic planning, obtaining resources, attracting volunteers)? • How do they align with community/local development priorities?
Impact on the student	• Do the students learn anything that they wouldn't learn in a classroom? • Are there things that they can only learn through service learning? • Does it bring the theory to life/help them to understand the course material better?

Building block	Question
Academic staff	
Impact on the community	• What changes did you start to notice once the volunteering was underway? (i.e. physical changes, attitudinal changes, behaviour changes)? • Why were these changes important? • Have all the changes been positive? • Were there any changes at an organisational or personal level that made a difference to how you operated or what you did (i.e. changes that translated into 'action on the ground')?
Long-term changes	• What medium-term changes do you expect to see? • What long-term changes do you expect? • Why will these be important?
Knowing/ understanding change	• How will you know these changes have happened? • Have you evaluated the impact you have had on the community?
The university relationship with the community	• Do communities need volunteers? • Can you describe your relationship with the community? • How did you engagement with the community/NGO/LGU come about? • What made this engagement easy/ difficult? • What issues did you need to consider?
Key lessons/ recommendations	• Reflecting on your 'journey' to date, and the lessons learned, what is your vision for HEI-led volunteerism going into the future? • What could have made volunteer engagement more effective? • What common challenges do you face in supporting volunteering? • If another academic department asked you about supporting HEI volunteers what advice would you give them? • What innovations would you suggest we include in our paper to influence policy makers?
Volunteers	
Impact on the volunteer – what do they gain?	• What was your volunteer experience like? • Have you learnt something on your placement that you would not have learnt in the classroom or your day-to-day job? What? • What makes you effective as a volunteer?
Impact on the community – what do they gain?	• What changes did you see in the community? • Were they all positive?

3. Other outputs related to this case study

- Proceedings from National Conference on Engaging Academe in Volunteering

  1. Conference report
  2. Manifesto

- Literature review on Service Learning

- Post-NCEAV Paper

  1. *Active Citizenship and Volunteerism in Philippine Higher Educational Institutions*

- Mini case study reports

  1. Bicol University, Legazpi
  2. BISU, Bohol
  3. Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro

Valuing Volunteering was a two year (2012 – 2014) global action research project, conducted by VSO and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) to understand how, where and when volunteering affects poverty and contributes to sustainable development. This case study is part of a series of inquiries conducted in the Philippines, Kenya, Mozambique and Nepal which explore the role of volunteering across different development contexts and systems. Using Participatory Systemic Action Research it asks local partners, communities and volunteers to reflect on how and where volunteering can contribute to positive, sustainable change.

For more information about the global *Valuing Volunteering* study please contact: enquiry@vso.org.uk

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She is a Doctoral Researcher with the Institute of Development Studies, exploring how interpersonal well-being influences the effectiveness of volunteering as a strategy for managing natural resources. She is Associate to the consulting arm of the New Economics Foundation (nef) and previously worked for nef's award-winning centre for well-being.

Jody's passion is the design of socio-economic contexts that support greater human well-being, social justice and environmental sustainability. She has lived and worked in the UK, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Philippines, Malaysia and China, alongside fishermen, farmers, factory workers, young people and organisational leaders to understand and influence how change happens.