

# **The Value of International Volunteerism**

*A Review of Literature on International Volunteer-Sending Programs*

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This paper provides a review of the structure, costs, and benefits of international volunteer programs in order to help inform the implementation and monitoring of the 2003 Volunteers for Prosperity Presidential Initiative.

Based on a review of existing literature, this paper offers the following observations about international volunteer programs:

- The most important characteristic for volunteer recruitment is significant technical experience, although return or “professional” volunteers are seen as more effective.
- A short-term international volunteer costs approximately \$1,200 per day, a cost that is comparable to that of a consultant.
- Volunteers have a comparative non-monetary advantage over consultants because of their perceived independence and status as a practitioner instead of a professional advisor.
- Placement costs for volunteer assistance are most commonly shared by the volunteer-sending agency and the host organization.
- Successful programs are characterized by well-defined goals for individual volunteer assignments and guided by a long-term vision

The attached appendix also provides a brief overview of the basic institutional characteristics of selected American and foreign international volunteer-sending programs.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As announced by President Bush, the Volunteers for Prosperity Initiative is defined by three central characteristics<sup>1</sup>:

1. It works to place “highly skilled” American professionals in the developing world to share their technical expertise in areas such as: health care, information technology, financial services, trade and investment, education, and agricultural development.
2. These professionals will donate their time and expertise.
3. They will serve for “for flexible periods of time, such as weeks, months, or longer.”

The following discussion examines the experiences of other international volunteer programs that share similar characteristics, in order to provide insight into issues surrounding the implementation of this new initiative.

This paper is grounded in information published by a number of international volunteer-sending agencies, both within and outside of the U.S., several of which are detailed in the attached appendix. However, despite the flurry of literature that was produced as part of the United Nations International Year of the Volunteer (2001), little of this work is directly relevant to a program like Volunteers for Prosperity. As a result, this paper draws most heavily on evaluations of three structurally similar programs: the Financial Services Volunteer Corps (FSVC); the Canadian Executive Services Organization (CESO); and the Farmer-to-Farmer Program (FtF). Both the FSVC and the CESO directly place American and Canadian executives for short-term consultancies throughout the world, while the FtF program represents a consortium of individual agriculturally oriented placement-agencies. Together, the lessons learned from these programs, help provide some guidance for the newly implemented Volunteers for Prosperity Initiative.

## II. HOW DO THESE PROGRAMS WORK? AN OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERING

The basic mechanism for administering the volunteer programs was similar throughout the programs surveyed. A headquarters staff, located in the sponsoring country (i.e., the U.S., Canada, U.K.), oversees the program by setting policy goals and selecting volunteer candidates. The country or regional office then develops relationships with the organizations that host volunteers, creates scopes of work, and places appropriate volunteers. When possible, it is common for the agency to provide the host organization with a choice of volunteers, which helps ensure that the volunteer most closely meets the needs of the host. It is this field office that is also responsible for monitoring and evaluation, a task that is often cited as taxing the resources of smaller offices.

The volunteer consultants donate only their time (estimated by FtF to be \$400-\$450 per day, but is likely to be more for senior executives) and the program covers all the travel, lodging, insurance and placement costs associated with the project. As discussed below, these costs are often shared by host organizations and volunteer agencies, although several other funding

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the program description given on the USA Freedom Corps website [http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/for\\_volunteers/spotlight/articles/volunteers\\_for\\_prosperity/index.asp](http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/for_volunteers/spotlight/articles/volunteers_for_prosperity/index.asp) and the Commencement Address to the United States Coast Guard Academy [http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/about\\_usafc/whats\\_new/speeches/20030521.asp](http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/about_usafc/whats_new/speeches/20030521.asp)

arrangements can be employed. Volunteer placement agencies also routinely provide a brief, but usually considered to be adequate, pre-assignment preparation program.

The bulk of these assignments can be considered short term, lasting anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. The shortest of these short-term assignments was with the FSVC, lasting an average of 4.2 days. The brevity of this program can most likely be attributed to the fact that the FSVC's volunteer base is, by requirement, currently employed and extremely senior in the financial sector. Other more extended programs run for set periods of time, such as the Geekcorps' 4 month assignment or the MBA Enterprise Corps, whose assignments run 15 months. The non-U.S.-based programs have the longest voluntary placements of the organizations surveyed here, with the United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) and the British Voluntary Service Organization (VSO) fielding volunteers for up to two years. However, unlike the structurally similar Peace Corps, these programs recruit only skilled professionals with extensive work experience.

### III. WHO ARE THESE VOLUNTEERS?

Technical expertise is the single most important factor in volunteer recruitment, and international experience is not seen as necessary. However, repeat, or "professional" volunteers are often identified as being more effective, suggesting that some previous volunteering experience is an important, although secondary, characteristic of a successful volunteer.

#### **Experienced Professionals**

Professional experience, the more extensive the better, is the most basic requirement for volunteer recruitment. This is because, according to the Geekcorps, "a volunteer without work experience in his or her own culture is a hard sell to place in a foreign work environment"<sup>2</sup>

The minimum amount of work experience accepted by the volunteer placement agencies surveyed here is 2 years, which is acceptable for some appointments with the VSO. The bulk of programs, however, require *at least* 5-10 years of professional experience, and in the case of executive service organizations, that experience must be at the executive level. Seniority is so valued that the CESO website boasts that its volunteers "have a lifetime of work experience to share whether it's business, technical or professional. Typical CESO [Volunteer Advisors (VAs)] have more than 35 years of practical experience."<sup>3</sup> The primary exception to this preference for work experience is the MBA Enterprise Corps, which recruits recent MBA recipients who have less professional experience, but have practical business skills gained through academic training. Their placements are also much longer in duration than those of the other, primarily short-term advisors, suggesting some relationship between short-term effectiveness and work experience.

The evaluations of short-term business advisors draw a direct correlation between level of experience and effectiveness. The evaluation of the CESO finds that "the age of CESO VAs and their proportionately extensive experience were generally a key success factor in achieving results."(Baldwin et al. 2000, 19) Similarly, the FSVC evaluation found that one of that

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<sup>2</sup> Quote from the Geekcorps website "Volunteer FAQs"  
<http://www.geekcorps.org/default.asp?11i=205&12i=207#207>

<sup>3</sup> Quote from the CESO website "Volunteer Advisors Home Page"  
<http://www.ceso-saco.com/volunteers.htm>

organization's strongest attributes was the seniority of its volunteers, among whom have been executives like Paul Volcker, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board and Gerald Corrigan, former President of the New York Fed. It notes that "because of the influential positions that FSVC volunteers hold or previously held, FSVC has been given unusual access to very senior Russian decision-makers in ministries, regulatory agencies and the central bank."(Ott et al., 17)

### **The Old Folks' Peace Corps**

Although no figures on age composition were readily available, the high value placed on experience, and the amount of time retirees are able to give, suggests that the majority of these volunteers are recently retired professionals. In fact, the International Executive Service Corps (IESC) is sometimes referred to as the "old folks' Peace Corps" because most IESC projects are carried out by retired U.S. citizens (Winter 2001)

The benefit of older volunteers is widely recognized in the literature, since they "provide the voice of experience" that is so central to these skills-based programs. (Jepson et al. 2003, 5) But there is an age ceiling to many of these programs, suggesting that a bias against the elderly found in many domestic volunteer programs also exists within international programs.<sup>4</sup> This is seen in the International Executive Service Corps, which does not accept volunteers who have been retired for more than three years, and VSO only recruits people under 68 placing an age limit of 70 for field service.

The FtF program recognizes the comparative advantages of employing both retirees and non-retirees, and attempts to use both in equal proportions. This policy is based on the contention that "the use of active and retired workers provides a balance between transferring the latest technology and providing the voice of experience."(Jepson et al. 2003, 5) Still, the average age of their volunteers was 59.

### **No International Experience Required**

According to an evaluation of the FSVC, "most [volunteers] have little previous professional experience outside of the U.S.," a condition that is not considered to be detrimental to the effectiveness of the program. (Ott et al. 2000, 15) This is because technical knowledge, rather than familiarity with the individual country context, is the focal point of these programs. As one Russian host of a FSVC volunteer noted, "there are many who know Russia but do not have anything of value to tell us; there are some [like FSVC volunteers] who have much to tell us and of them, few will know the language."(Ott et al 2000, 16)

Perhaps for this reason, none of the volunteer programs surveyed require, or even suggest, that any type of previous international experience is necessary to participate in these programs. The

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<sup>4</sup> A 1997 survey by the London-based Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) found that older volunteers were underrepresented, and declining in numbers, in the British voluntary sector. This was found to be due, in part, to upper age limits placed on volunteers, which "actively discriminate against people on the grounds of age and are a waste of potential talent." Similarly low levels of people aged 55 and over engaged in voluntary activity were found in a U.S. survey conducted the Independent Sector, a Washington-based research group. While the exact reasons for such a bias are difficult to ascertain, the IVR study suggests that "older people are often perceived as lacking the ability to carry out tasks due to declining health." A brief of the IVR study can be found at <http://www.ivr.org.uk/age.htm> and the Independent Sector brief can be found at <http://www.independentsector.org/PDFs/SeniorVolun.pdf>

only exception to this is the UNVs “Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) initiative,” that “makes it possible for professionals from developing countries who live abroad to return to their home countries and offer technical short-term assistance.”<sup>5</sup>

Foreign language skills are also regarded as useful, but not required. Most programs provide an interpreter in order to overcome language barriers. However, the FtF evaluation notes that interpreter quality is a significant aspect of the experience, as “some interpreters were limited on technical vocabulary needed for the project (a banker and food technologist said they were hampered because interpreters were not familiar with terms.)” (Jepson et al 2003, 6)

Even the longer-term exchange programs like the Geekcorps and the UNVs do not require or provide language training, although the Geekcorps does sanction some immersion programs that the volunteer can take on their own time and at their own expense. The exception to this is the MBA corps, where the 15-month program “consists of three months of in-country language training and culture training followed by twelve months of service with host organization.”<sup>6</sup> This difference can be attributed to the fact that it is conceived of as an educational as well as service-provision endeavor.

### **‘Professional Volunteers’**

The FtF evaluation found that the effectiveness and efficiency of a volunteer increased in proportion to their experience as a volunteer. In other words, practice makes perfect. About one half of the FtF volunteers performed multiple assignments, a number that increased steadily over the program’s life. The evaluators noted that these “ ‘professional’ volunteers appear to be generally more effective in relating their specific tasks to the context of the specific [host organizations] they are working with and the country/sector in general.” (Jepson et al. 2003, 65) Similarly, the evaluation of the CESO notes that “repeat assignments, which build on previous results, help improve sustainability.” (Baldwin et al. 2000, 9) This is attributed to the fact that they “understand what works, how to adjust in mid-assignment, and they are fully familiar with logistical matters and cultural aspects.” (Jepson et al. 2003, 74)

## **IV. ECONOMIC COSTS**

The FtF evaluation estimates that it costs an average of \$1,200 per day to field a short-term consultant to an overseas mission. Approximately \$800 of this is actual cash outlay, while the other \$400 is in-kind salary contribution by the individual volunteer. (Jepson et al. 2003, 10)

While it is clear that many of the other programs surveyed keep similar records of program costs, they are not made widely available. As a result, the breakdown of expenses provided in the FtF evaluation serves as the sole indicator of real costs of volunteering programs given in this paper. The undesirable aspects of relying on one source are somewhat mitigated in this case, since the FtF program represents a consortium of five independent volunteer-sending agencies.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Quote from the United Nations Volunteer Program website “Your Options Abroad” <http://www.unv.org/volunteers/options/abroad/tokten.htm>

<sup>6</sup> This quote is taken from the MBA Enterprise Corps website <http://www.mbaec-cdc.org/>

<sup>7</sup> These partners are: ACDI/VOCA; Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs (CNFA); Land O’Lakes; and Winrock International.

These costs can be divided into fixed and per-volunteer costs. Fixed costs, which include staff and administration expenses, remain largely unchanged regardless of how many volunteers are fielded. These include: general program administration, estimated at \$200- \$400 per day; and field office support, estimated at around \$100-\$300 per day. Staff costs, both at headquarters and in the field, consist of around 20% of these expenses.

The costs per volunteer are variable, depending on the location and duration of the assignment. On average, volunteer placement in the FtF program costs around \$200 per day. This includes: travel to and from the assignment; travel within country (because the FtF program fields volunteers on multiple assignments once in country, this expense may be slightly higher than in other programs); per diem; health insurance; lodging (the FtF prefers home-stays for volunteers, but executive volunteer groups often provide more luxurious, and expensive, accommodations.) The daily expense for a UNV is most likely higher, because they also provide a settle-in grant for the first three months of the 1-2 year program, as well as paid annual leave.

The volunteer's salary contribution makes up the largest proportion of the per-volunteer costs, estimated by FtF to be \$400-\$450 per day. Despite the economic and public relations value of this measure, there is little standardization among groups in quantifying the value of *pro bono* labor. For example, commenting on the same value as the FtF report, the FSVC estimates that the aggregate *pro bono* contributions of its volunteers between the period of April 1995 and December 1999 total approximately \$10.7 million for 258 volunteers, or an average of \$41,473 per volunteer. (Ott et al. 2000, 9) Because of differences in reporting, it is impossible to compare the value of donated labor between these programs. Clearly, the task of measurement is complicated by the fact that the in-kind salary contribution varies among profession and individual, with the monetary value of a former CEO's contribution outweighing that of a farmer. They also differ in terms of measurement, with some groups calculating labor costs per day, hour, or even per assignment. While efforts have been made in the American context to develop a standard hourly value for volunteer labor, no such developments are taking place in regard to the specialized nature of international volunteerism.<sup>8</sup>

## V. VOLUNTEER VS. CONTRACTOR

In terms of monetary costs, a volunteer may be just as pricey as a similarly skilled paid consultant or contractor. However, the non-monetary benefits of volunteer assistance provide a meaningful counterbalance to those expenses.

### **Is a Volunteer less Expensive than a Contractor?**

Factoring in all real costs, the expense of volunteer labor is not significantly less than that of a consultant. As the FtF evaluation notes, "the costs per volunteer day may appear to be high, even comparable to those for paid consultants [contracted by donor agencies.]" (Jepson et al. 2003, 10) But it does not consider them to be unreasonable because the volunteer cost includes several other factors that are not directly included in the calculus of retaining a consultant. The relatively high cost of volunteers is attributed to the fact that stand-alone volunteer programs must maintain their own administrative and program infrastructure, whereas consultants can rely on the in-country staff of donor missions. Thus, the consultant's rate does not include costs associated with designing their scope of work and contracting appropriate staff. The volunteer's rate, on the other

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<sup>8</sup> As calculated by the Independent Sector, the dollar value of volunteer time in the United States is \$16.54 per hour for 2002. [http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer\\_time.html](http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html)

hand, includes everything from their own personal labor costs to rent for the New York (or Washington, or London) headquarters offices. Looking at it in this light, the volunteer is roughly as expensive to retain as a contractor, since the savings of donated labor are off-set by the costs of administering a separate volunteer program. Nevertheless, the FtF evaluation concludes that the cost of volunteer labor is reasonable, even if it does not net a substantial saving.

While the FtF evaluation suggests that volunteer programs can be cost-effective, the experience of the CESO demonstrates that is not always the case. (Baldwin et al. 2000, 19) This highly critical evaluation of the Canadian program contends that cost-effectiveness is dependent on a favorable relationship between the fixed program costs and the variable per-volunteer costs. Throughout the late 1990s, the number of volunteer assignments dropped an average of 29 percent. While the overall fixed costs of administering and staffing the offices remained largely unchanged, the cost per volunteer assignment increased because there were fewer numbers to absorb those costs. As a result, the “unit cost per assignment” was determined to be unsustainably high.

### **The Non-Monetary Benefits of Volunteer Labor**

Although there may be no significant savings in terms of cost, volunteer labor appears to enjoy enough non-monetary advantages over a consultant or contractor to make it a useful tool for foreign assistance.

Assistance to those who cannot afford a consultant. The CESO is designed to be an alternative to consultants, since “its purpose is to transfer Canadian expertise to businesses, communities, and organizations in Canada and abroad that cannot access paid consulting services.”(Baldwin et al. 2000, 4) The UNV and several of the American volunteer programs also note that they target organizations that do not have the funds to hire a consultant, or do not have the capacity to identify a clearly defined scope of work for a consultant.

A peer-to-peer relationship. Volunteer programs also compete with paid consultancy services, providing a similar product, but in a notably different manner. Volunteers’ status as active professionals, contributing their services on a *pro bono* basis, appears to create a different kind of relationship between client and advisor than is present with a full-fee consultant. The FSVC evaluation quotes one volunteer as describing his role “as offering advice on a take-it-or-leave-it basis—with no proprietary interest or policy objective imbedded in the relationship, simply one of offered expertise.”(Ott et al. 2000, 17) A similar sentiment was echoed in the FtF evaluation, which noted that “hosts feel that they had received expert advice and made a friend,” a significant number of whom remained in contact even after the assignment had ended. (Jepson et al. 2003, 5) Reflecting on the trust that often develops between the volunteer and host, the FSVC evaluation notes that “whatever the combination of reasons, the volunteer-counterpart relationship is rather unique, in some regards resembling a client-attorney relationship.” (Ott et al. 2000, 17)

An Independent Entity This different status also helped to create the perception among hosts that volunteers were intellectually and financially independent entities. The FSVC evaluation notes that “in contrast with officials and consultants from the IMF or the World Bank or consultants from USAID or other organizations, many of whom are certainly well qualified, the Russians

seem to view the FSVC's volunteer experts as independent- with no institutional position that they are expected to represent." (Ott et al. 2000, 17)

One of the values of this perceived independence is that volunteers are not associated with larger financial interests. As a result, they are not viewed as a potential funding source since, according to the FtF evaluation, "the advantage of the FtF volunteer is that they have no funding for projects and the host, knowing this, asks a volunteer for their assistance, not their money." (Jepson et al. 2003, 8) The FSVC evaluation also highlights the fact that are also not seen as looking to expand their market access or secure future consulting contracts, because most participants rarely do business in the host country.

Added value to USAID The FtF evaluation also identified two specific advantages of US-supported volunteer programs to on-going USAID efforts in the field. First, once volunteers were in country, their expertise could be borrowed to help with other USAID projects without incurring extra expense. Second, in some instances, a volunteer can often be fielded to assist with a USAID-funded project more quickly than a consultant can be contracted. (Jepson et al. 2003, 20)

## VI. WHO PAYS THE COSTS OF VOLUNTEERS?

Although the individual volunteer pays very little to be involved in these programs, as noted above, there are significant costs involved in fielding these individuals. These costs can be borne either entirely by the volunteer placement agency or the host organization, or these agencies can share the costs to some extent. While a highly limited discussion of these options takes place in the public literature, cost-sharing arrangements appear to be the most popular financing mechanism from the perspective of volunteer-sending groups.

### **One Entity Covers All Costs**

The Volunteer Placement Agency Covers All Costs In some programs, the host organization does not assume any of the costs associated with receiving a volunteer. Instead, the volunteer placement agency absorbs all of the costs as part of their normal operating expenses. The UNVs is an example of this type of program, in which the volunteer program is subsidized by national (host and otherwise) contributions to the UNV voluntary fund and the UNDP. In cases where the receiving agency does not have the resources to share costs with the placement agency, the CESO also notes that it will support the volunteer entirely.

Host Organization Pays All costs Very few programs ask the host organization to pay the full cost of a volunteer placement. One program that does, the IESC, asks clients to do so *only in countries where USAID no longer operates*, since a major proportion of IESC's funding is from US government sources.

Volunteer vacations. Some programs, often termed "volunteer vacations" require volunteers to pay all costs or the majority of the expenses themselves. Programs like Habitat for Humanity or Cross-Cultural Solutions, range in cost from approximately \$1,000 to \$2,000 for a 1-3 week program, and do not require specialized skills relevant to the country context. Because they are non-skilled voluntary efforts, and do not share the central characteristics of the VP initiative, these programs are not considered in any other section of this paper. However, in regard to

funding mechanisms, it is interesting to note the increasing popularity of such fee-based international volunteer vacation programs.

### **Cost-Sharing Arrangements**

An arrangement in which the volunteer placement agency and the host organization share costs appears to be the most common and desirable financing mechanism for international volunteer programs. The value of this approach is stressed in the CESO evaluation, which concludes that cost-sharing is a “proven-success factor” in their programs, since it “constitutes a form of partnership and demonstrates a form of commitment by beneficiaries for achieving results.” (Baldwin et al. 2000, 17) In this program, according to its website, “the client can be expected to cover costs such as airfare, accommodation, meals, local transportation and other necessary services. In cases where this is not possible, CESO will cover part of the expenses.” The FtF program, as noted above, also engages in cost sharing, with host organizations frequently providing accommodations for volunteers as their contribution to the project. Similarly, the IESC engages in cost sharing in countries where USAID funding is available.

## **VII. HOW IS SUCCESS MEASURED IN VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS?**

Measuring the benefits of volunteer labor is a far more difficult endeavor than assessing its real costs. The evaluations surveyed here suggest that the two most important factors in achieving success in volunteer programs are 1) well-defined, highly focused interventions and 2) long-term programming strategies and repeat assignments. Together, these two elements are central in helping to achieve desirable outputs, outcomes, and possibly, impacts.

Outputs Highly focused interventions help contribute to ability of these programs to produce output results, the most common product of volunteer assistance. Because of the short-term nature of most skilled volunteer advisory programs, results are most often measured in terms of outputs, including: problems identified, solutions proposed, or numbers of people trained. The ability of a volunteer to produce such results in a 1-3 week assignment is directly related to the placement and host agency’s abilities to clearly define a manageable project and achievable goals for the volunteer’s visit.

Outcomes These outputs are most likely to lead to outcomes, such as the changes prescribed by the volunteer, in cases where the project is part of a sustained effort by the volunteer agency. The CESO evaluation notes that “88% of the projects produced one or several outcomes linked to the outputs delivered.” One of the primary mechanisms for this success, apart from the “highly focused interventions” was the presence of “repeat assignments, which build on previous results.” (Baldwin et al. 2000, 9) Similarly, both the FtF and IESC evaluations call for longer-term volunteer assistance strategies and mechanisms for magnifying the impact of individual volunteers.

Impacts While some programs claim to have a significant impact on the problems addressed by volunteers, it is difficult to substantiate these results. Claims such as the FtF’s contention that “at least 80% of all activity increases farm production and farmers’ incomes,” (Jepson et al. 2003, 3) are called into question by observations that, “in any development program, the success or failure to achieve desired changes is almost always the result of both the project and events exogenous to the project, making attribution, the assignments of results to a project, a difficult problem for

evaluators.” (Ott et al. 2000, 21) In the same vein, an evaluation of several business volunteer programs in the former Soviet Union noted that “the evaluator is skeptical of the definition and value of data related to ‘jobs created/sustained’ and ‘indirect beneficiaries,’ and was logistically unable to confirm the existence/quality of US-Russian trade links.” (Corry and Bykov 1999, 15)

Nonetheless, evaluators can offer some suggestions on what does not produce long-term impacts, and what may. The CESO evaluation notes that the program was not able to achieve its stated goals of improving Canadian trade relations, since “some of the countries identified, and most beneficiaries, are too small to attract Canadian business and/or generate sales of Canadian goods and services.” (Baldwin et al. 2000, 8) On the other hand, the FSVC evaluation notes that “real impacts” are likely to be the product of long-term goal-setting and periodic reviews of the progress toward those goals.

## **VIII. WHAT ELSE WORKS?**

Apart from the lessons on volunteer selection, financing, and obtaining results that are discussed above, the literature offers several more observations on what helps contribute to a successful volunteer program. These are listed briefly below, and are roughly divided into categories pertaining to what works from the perspectives of the individual volunteer and the volunteer-sending agency.

### **From the Volunteer’s Perspective**

- The FtF evaluation found that volunteers responded best to working with hosts in only one or two locations, rather than shuttling them around to as many hosts as possible. Not only did they find such an arrangement physically taxing, but they also did not have sufficient time to provide technical assistance to each host.
- While USAID officials expressed concern at the short tenure of FSVC consultancies, lasting an average of 4.2 days, both volunteers and host institutions saw that as a reasonable amount of time.
- FtF volunteers suggested that assignments receive more publicity, since volunteerism is a focus of the current administration.
- Volunteers want to be kept apprised of the results of their project even after they return, because they want to know that their involvement actually ‘meant something.’
- According to the FtF evaluation, some volunteers like to stay in private homes with host families during their assignment. When possible, these stays should be encouraged because they help lead to a richer experience, but only when the interpreter stays there too.

### **From the Volunteer Agency Perspective:**

- The FtF evaluation concludes that the most successful programs are those that place a great deal of responsibility and discretion on their local staffs.
- Both the CESO and FSVC evaluations noted that ‘demand driven’ programming is most desirable, in which host organizations define their own needs and priorities for volunteer placement.
- Based on the experience of the FtF project, it is noted that effectiveness is best gauged when steps have been taken at the beginning of the project to clarify definitions of what constitutes an assignment and how that is measured (number of days or individual project.)
- The CESO experience demonstrated that “[Volunteer Advisor] assignments within rapidly expanding, medium and larger size companies have more impact than within micro or very small companies.” (Baldwin et al 2000, 8)

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**Appendix:  
Overview of Selected International Volunteer Programs**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Length of assignment</b>	<b>Volunteer Age/ Experience Requirements</b>	<b>Where they work</b>	<b>Major sources of funding</b>
<b><i>U.S.- based programs:</i></b>				
Financial Services Volunteer Corps <a href="http://www.fsvc.org">http://www.fsvc.org</a>	1-2 weeks, Average of 4.6 days	“FSVC selects volunteers from among experienced practitioners currently holding senior positions in US financial institutions, law firms and regulatory agencies”	23 Former Socialist countries and emerging markets in central Europe	USAID
ACDI/VOCA <a href="http://www.acdivoca.org">www.acdivoca.org</a>	2-4 weeks	mid-career professionals with significant experience	35 Countries in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Africa and the Middle East, East Asia, Latin America	USAID USDA Individuals, corporations, and foundations
Canadian Executive Service Organization  <a href="http://www.ceso-saco.com/">http://www.ceso-saco.com/</a>	2-6 weeks average	Executives with an average of 35 years of experience	CESO International Services is active in 21 countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Caribbean and in the 16 new market economies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.	CIDA
IESC <a href="http://www.iesc.org/">http://www.iesc.org/</a>	From a week to several months.	Executives in certain industries with at least 10 years experience and/or retired for not more than 3 years	52 countries throughout Asia, Africa, Europe and Eurasia, Latin America and Caribbean, and the Near East	USAID and other government agencies. American corporations, foundations and individuals

**Appendix (continued):  
Overview of Selected International Volunteer Programs**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Length of assignment</b>	<b>Volunteer Age/ Experience Requirements</b>	<b>Where they work</b>	<b>Major sources of funding</b>
Geekcorps- a division of IESC <a href="http://www.geekcorps.org">www.geekcorps.org</a>	4 months	At least 3 years of experience	8 developing countries: Romania, Rwanda, Mongolia, Thailand, Lebanon, Bulgaria, Armenia, Ghana	Some companies sponsor their employees, private donations, some USAID funding
<i>Non-U.S.- based programs</i>				
Voluntary Service Organization <a href="http://www.vso.org.uk">www.vso.org.uk</a>	Most placements 2 years; 6- 12 months for “Business Partnerships”	Recruit adults aged 25-68. 2-3 years experience required, depending on occupation	VSO sends volunteers to 74 countries and has 40 Programme Offices around the world.	DFID, private donations
United Nations Volunteers	The majority of placements for 1-2 years, some 2-12 months	25 years and over with at least 5 years technical experience	139 UN member states in 2002	UNDP, UN agencies, contributions from host governments, and the UNV Special Voluntary Fund.