

Volunteers

Building Knowledge and Bridges for Success Under Donor-Sponsored Development Programs

Professionals who volunteer their time contribute invaluable technical assistance to beneficiaries in developing and transitional countries. ACDI/VOCA's volunteer advisors provide technical and managerial support to a broad range of private enterprises, business support organizations and institutions, both governmental and nongovernmental, that are integral to a sustainable economy.

ACDI/VOCA volunteer advisors are an efficient and low-cost method of bringing specialized short-term talent and long-term impact to a development program. Though most serve for only two to four weeks, they bring technical innovation and dedication to their work. Volunteers add an important people-to-people element, building relationships with individuals and businesses from small farms to financial institutions, large processing companies and business service providers. These relationships are not fleeting; they often result in permanent business linkages and ongoing cultural exchanges.

Many of ACDI/VOCA's volunteer advisors have been donating their time for over a decade. ACDI/VOCA volunteers have been instrumental in developing multiple strategic partnerships, particularly in linking agricultural production and markets. They often serve on teams or go on follow-up assignments

to deepen and sustain their impact. In response to specific, targeted requests for assistance (scopes of work), volunteer advisors provide practical, hands-on technical assistance and/or brief training seminars or presentations in their areas of expertise. At the end of the assignment, they present their findings and recommendations in a written report that provides a roadmap for the beneficiaries to follow and for field staff to use in monitoring progress.

The financial value of ACDI/VOCA volunteer experts has been established by our internal auditing policies and procedures to be \$470.77 per day based on comparative market data.

Why Do People Volunteer?

There are many reasons people volunteer. Many feel it is their responsibility to "give back" for the opportunities they have received; others are interested in cultural exchange; some want to gain professional experience. Regardless of the reason, the value and commitment they bring is indisputable. Volunteer advisors return home and share information with their communities about their personal and professional experiences overseas as well as their increased understanding of the value of foreign aid. Many volunteers continue to maintain personal and professional relationships with the beneficiaries for months or even years.



Why Include a Volunteer Component in Your Program?

Volunteers:

- » contribute cost-effective technical assistance and training
- » develop long-lasting business linkages and relationships
- » leverage additional third-party resources
- » promote cultural exchanges
- » support practical application of research.

Include Volunteers in a New or Ongoing Program

Short-term Assistance

Short-term ACDI/VOCA volunteers are mid- to late-career professionals who offer high-quality technical skills and years of experience in their field.

U.S. Volunteers:

Volunteer advisors from our database of 12,000 conduct short-term (two weeks to one month) technical assistance assignments in areas related to the core interventions of a development program.

Third-country Volunteers:

Volunteer advisors worldwide are identified for technical experience in the programs' core technical areas.

Business Linkage Volunteers:

Potential buyers are identified and offered an opportunity to visit and work with value chain participants and assist them in meeting buyer/market specifications.

Increase Your Program's Impact

Whether organizing cooperatives, training bankers, helping businesses draft marketing plans, advising on food processing or working with farmers one-on-one, volunteer advisors sow the seeds of international cooperation. Once home they share important cultural knowledge and understanding with fellow Americans, and help to develop an appreciation of foreign aid as a worthy endeavor and a win-win for the United States. In summary, using volunteer advisors is a cost-effective way to achieve broad and sustainable impact.

Longer-term Assistance

Young Professionals Program:

Under this program ACDI/VOCA arranges long-term (two to six months) volunteer service by U.S. or host country graduate students whose area of study or research offers technical expertise to a program. Graduate students are assigned specific tasks and deliverables, receive staff guidance and support, and in some cases are paired with other students from either U.S. or local universities. In addition, we coordinate small teams of graduate students from select universities to respond to a particular development need, for example, the installation of a potable water or irrigation system, or construction of a shared agriculture or community-based facility. The program and the team develop an intervention to address the need. The university team collects resources to respond to the intervention and travels to the site to address and implement the activity, resulting in valuable third-party support to the program.

For More Information

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Local or Regional Volunteer Support:

ACDI/VOCA also recruits local professional talent to act as short- or long-term volunteer advisors. In special cases, we help establish local/regional volunteer programs, create a database of volunteers, and train staff on finding and managing local expertise. This provides needed technical assistance to our beneficiaries in their own language, and with the local cultural and business knowledge that is often crucial to success. Volunteers provide administrative and technical support to associations, cooperatives and other enterprises. Developing a local or regional volunteer database contributes to sustainability after program completion.

