

ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018



Introduction

International Citizen Service (ICS) brings together young people from the UK to volunteer side-by-side with young people from developing countries in some of the poorest communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The diversity of ICS volunteers allows for a unique sharing of ideas and perspectives. This brings about innovative collaboration on development projects which is aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and ending poverty.

ICS is funded by the UK government and led by VSO, in partnership with respected development organisations. This year, we celebrated our 30,000th ICS volunteer, and by the end of 2018 we will have created a global community of over 35,000 active citizens: a lasting legacy of young people making a positive contribution to their communities and to fighting poverty.

This report covers the achievements of ICS from April 2017 to March 2018.

Where we work

In the past year, over 6,550 ICS volunteers have worked alongside local communities in 21 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America:

Bangladesh
Burkina Faso
Cambodia
Ethiopia
Ghana
India
Kenya
Liberia
Malawi
Nepal
Nicaragua
Nigeria
Rwanda
Senegal
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Tanzania
Togo
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Key achievements:

28,400

hours of peer
education delivered

7,000

new resources
developed

33,200

hours of training
delivered

17,700

hours of awareness
raising carried out

3,300

action research
projects completed

1,870

community infrastructure
projects worked on

Highlights from ICS volunteers' contribution to tackling poverty



25-year-old civil engineer Benon Kwikiriza, from rural Uganda and accountant Faysal Ahmed, 26, from Oldham, our 30,000th ICS volunteers

Balloon Ventures ICS

We placed our 30,000th volunteers with Balloon Ventures in Uganda, working with a wide range of young entrepreneurs to grow their businesses.

Tearfund ICS

Tearfund ICS volunteers in South Africa brokered a partnership between a local school and an eye care provider to identify school aged children who needed eye tests, and provided them with free glasses if required.

VSO ICS

VSO ICS volunteers in Zambia partnered with a local radio station to host a show on youth sexual health and rights, reaching more remote areas of the community.

How ICS works

Now in its seventh year, ICS is an international volunteering for development programme that brings together diverse teams of volunteers to contribute to ending poverty in some of the world's poorest communities. Each team is made up of volunteers aged from 18-25, from both the UK and the host country, and supported by team leaders, who themselves are aged up to 35.

Led by VSO, ICS is delivered by a consortium of eight development organisations. All volunteer placements contribute to:

- Poverty reduction and sustainable development
- Personal and social development of each volunteer
- Empowering young people to act as active citizens within their own communities and beyond.

Sustainable development is at the heart of ICS, with volunteers contributing to a wide range of projects. ICS sets the benchmark for responsible and inclusive youth volunteering. Our projects achieve clear, measurable results, contributing to long-term development impact.

Our work encompasses livelihoods, education, civic participation and health – including sexual and reproductive health. A strong focus on social accountability runs through all our projects, and continues beyond them, as ICS empowers volunteers to engage as lifelong active citizens.

Volunteers also embark on a personal development journey, supported at all stages of the programme to develop new and transferable skills. All volunteers receive ongoing training and learning, starting with a residential pre-placement training and continuing through to their post-placement debrief.

Following their placement, ICS volunteers are required to complete at least one social action as part of Action at Home – a project in their home community on a social issue of their choosing. This final phase of the programme harnesses a volunteer's passion and enthusiasm for social change, encouraging them to continue as lifelong active citizens.

These experiences enable volunteers to take the next steps in their future aspirations after finishing the programme.



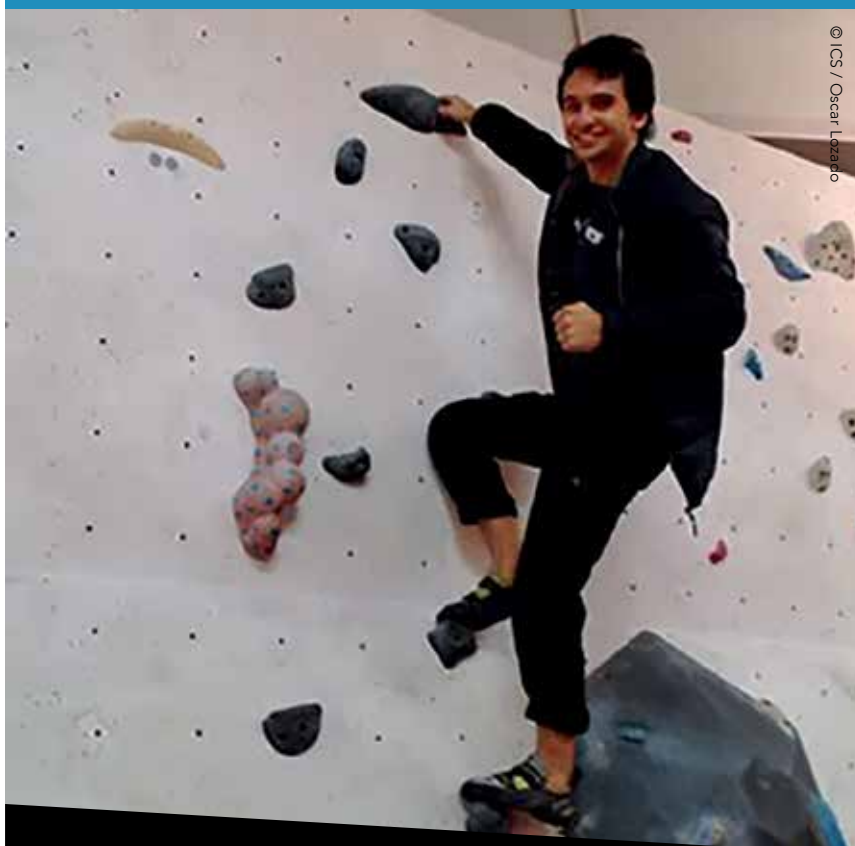
Sharon (left) and Charlotte (right) with their host mother in the kitchen at their host home in Betinko, Ghana.

Fundraising

As the first part of their ICS placement, fundraising is an opportunity for volunteers to learn new skills, grow in confidence and demonstrate a commitment to social action. From scaling the height of Everest in 11 hours to being egged and floured by friends, organising a bake sale for dogs to hand sewing t-shirt designs – our volunteers, time and time again, prove themselves to be creative, innovative, brave and more than ready to take on the challenge of an ICS placement.

The knowledge and experience our volunteers gain through fundraising is necessary and valuable for placement and beyond, as VSO ICS Volunteer Oscar reflects: *'I had never planned a major event like this on my own before, so the prospect was quite daunting! The fact it was so successful gave me a lot of confidence, which helped when I led the planning for events on placement.'*

ICS volunteers in the UK have raised over **£3.3 million** this year to support the ICS programme.



© ICS / Oscar Lazareo

Raleigh ICS volunteer Oscar, who scaled the height of Everest as part of his fundraising.

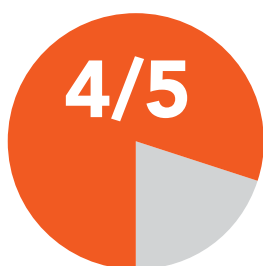
ICS partners

Led by VSO, ICS is delivered by a consortium of eight development organisations



ICS development impact

Over the past year, ICS volunteers have worked in 21 countries and contributed to 137 projects across the areas of livelihoods, health, education and civic participation. All our projects have a strong focus on social accountability, as ICS promotes young people and the communities in which they work to be agents of change. Through 444 volunteer-led teams, volunteers have spent over 79,000 volunteer hours working with community members to build sustainable livelihoods, lead healthy lives, get access to education, and understand their rights.



ICS volunteers felt that their ICS activities were making a difference to the communities they've worked with.

During this year, ICS has developed new and innovative projects designed to reach and support the most marginalised in society:

- In Kenya, VSO ICS volunteers advocated for the rights of disabled people and promoted inclusive neighbourhood spaces with Kenyan sign language.
- Restless Development, Balloon Ventures and Y Care International completed ICS Innovation Enterprise Projects, looking at a wide range of activities involving ICS volunteers, communities and enterprise opportunities. These included psychometric testing for entrepreneurs, the development of an e-learning app for volunteers, the formation of a new social enterprise in Uganda and training ICS volunteers in action research methods to better understand the barriers and needs of young people when accessing employability opportunities.

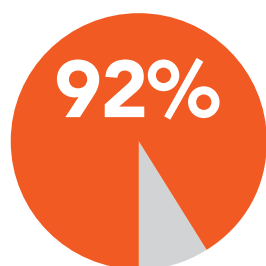


VSO ICS volunteers Naseem and Geoffrey say goodbye at the end of a session with school pupils in Loitokitok, Kenya.

© ICS / Adriane Chanesian

Working in partnership

On placement, ICS volunteers work alongside local community members and organisations. Partnerships are essential for ICS. They provide the local expertise and in-depth understanding of the community that enables volunteers to contribute to sustainable change. Partners are therefore integral to how we design and deliver projects. We work closely with these partners to regularly review our projects and impact.



92% of partners involved in ICS said their organisation was better able to bring positive change.

Challenges Worldwide ICS

In Uganda, Challenges Worldwide ICS volunteers support small businesses to grow, to create jobs, and to improve local economies. Volunteers work with these businesses to find solutions to their problems across a wide range of markets, from food and drink to alternative energy sources.

Claus, CEO of 21st Century Farms, shared the following about ICS volunteers: *"It's been an worthwhile opportunity working with Challenges Worldwide ICS. We have been able to identify gaps and devise solutions to the current challenges we have in our business and now have a clearer perspective moving forward. We hope to have increased impact, incomes and job creation for Uganda, Africa and the world in the fields of sustainable agriculture, energy and water."*



Y Care International volunteers in Senegal facilitate a session on small business creation for local girls, focusing on bleach production and selling.

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Community development

Livelihoods

ICS volunteers work with local communities to increase economic opportunities and self-sufficiency, particularly with disadvantaged groups. Activities this year included facilitating skills development to increase people's chances of finding employment, working with entrepreneurs to boost their income, and helping aspiring entrepreneurs to set up new enterprises.

Snapshot of ICS livelihoods (2017-2018)

3,334
volunteers

63
projects

196
teams

19
countries

Y Care International ICS



In Sierra Leone, ICS volunteers work to improve the economic resilience of young people in areas affected by Ebola. ICS volunteers provide one-to-one mentoring and group reflection sessions to women and young people taking part in vocational skills programmes, microfinance training and savings and credit groups provided by local branches of the YMCA. Volunteers support the skills development of young participants through peer mentoring and additionally support them to complete their training. One local leader in Robuya, Makeni, reported that women in the community were now able to better manage their businesses as a result of the mentoring support received in microfinance, and setting up their own saving and credit groups.



Challenges Worldwide ICS volunteers Deborah and Elliot with staff from Tro Tro Tractor, a technology SME connecting farmers with affordable agricultural equipment hire in Ghana.

Health

ICS volunteers focus on improving access and awareness of health rights and services, and promoting healthy practices among local people. Activities this year have included raising awareness of the importance of sanitation and hygiene, improving young people's knowledge of their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and promoting the availability of government and NGO community health services.

Snapshot of ICS health (2017-2018)

1,520

volunteers

26

projects

113

teams

11

countries

Raleigh ICS



In Tanzania, Raleigh ICS volunteers have been working to address issues of health, hygiene, water and sanitation in Kilombero District. ICS volunteers aim to improve the quality of hygiene education, giving sessions on handwashing and sanitation to the local community and schools. The project also focused on raising awareness of menstrual hygiene, training local peer educators to continue the ongoing mentoring to their peers.

Masibu Mahokala Salumu, a primary school teacher, said the following about the project: *"The community members' attitudes have changed through the knowledge and education on SWASH (School, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene). For example, I have noticed the emergence of tippy taps in the village. I recognise that change takes a long time yet, despite this, there are definite visual improvements and changes in behaviour."*



VSO ICS volunteers run a courtyard session on sexual reproductive health in Bangladesh.

Community development

Education

ICS education projects aim to improve access to education among disadvantaged groups. ICS activities include expanding access to education for disadvantaged groups in rural communities, supporting peer education networks for school-aged children, and introducing homework clubs to support the learning of children outside of school hours.

Snapshot of ICS education (2017-2018)

1,238

volunteers

31

projects

97

teams

13

countries

VSO ICS



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In Nepal, VSO ICS volunteers work to recruit and train peer educators as part of the Sisters for Sisters programme and VSO's Inclusive Education programming. Well-trained peer educators promote learning within peer groups, with topics focusing on girls' empowerment, career development, and the importance of education. Volunteers also ran a career development workshop, exposing local youth to the possibilities of careers across different sectors.



© ICS / Elina Eriksson

Restless ICS volunteers run a session on relationships in Zambia.

Civic participation

Civic participation projects amplify the voices of marginalised groups in society, building awareness of people's rights and their capacity to exercise control over decisions and resources. Activities this year have included helping local young people develop the skills for advocacy and energising community participation and active citizenship.

Snapshot of ICS civic participation (2017-2018)

480

volunteers

16

projects

38

teams

5

countries

International Service ICS



In Burkina Faso, ICS volunteers are raising awareness of the rights of disabled people, working towards improving the participation and inclusion of disabled people within their communities. Volunteers empower local people to be aware of national laws and rights of all people, including those with disabilities, through workshops, awareness raising sessions and inclusive sport activities.

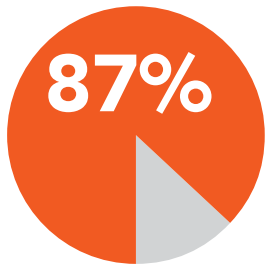
After five cohorts of ICS volunteers delivering awareness activities, organising inclusive sport sessions, supporting capacity building activities delivered together with the partner, Mr. Freddy (Handicap Solidaire Burkina Faso Executive Director) reported that *'the impact at community level was evident with more people living with disabilities visible... and empowered to join activities and access services.'*



VSO ICS volunteer, Julius, teaches local children about the Sustainable Development Goals in Hoima, Uganda.

Personal development

During their ICS journey, ICS volunteers gain crucial skills for their future and to support their development to becoming active citizens. Right from selection, volunteers are given the opportunity to explore global issues of interest to them, while stepping outside of their comfort zone, challenging themselves and enhancing their experiences of international development.



87% of ICS volunteers feel they have a better understanding of development issues.

VSO ICS



Growing up, Danial, 21, experienced exclusions from school and trouble with the police. He credits his ICS placement in Nepal as proof that your past doesn't have to define your future, and is now employed by Waltham Forest Council, working with schools and young offenders on issues like street safety.

"I had never been abroad before. The whole build-up to going away was terrifying. I was scared about the jetlag, about getting homesick being so far away. With my dyslexia, I was also worried about being put into a situation where I couldn't interact. However, when I got there it was one of the best experiences of my life. I want to show people that your background can't determine your future. I'm like them. I have moved on with my life to better myself. ICS gave me a lot of skills and personal development. I want to use my experience as a positive thing to inspire someone else."

For example, over 700 young people took part in five youth-led events to celebrate the UN's World Youth Skills Day. Alongside a UK event hosting a range of workshops and inspirational youth speakers, activities also took place in Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa and Liberia focusing on employability, leadership, arts and skills development. These events brought together ICS returned volunteers from their host countries, local young people and community members.

International Service ICS



For Paul, 24, ICS taught him to see disability in a different way. After spending his placement supporting other people with disabilities, Paul applied for an ICS Alumni Grant, and used this to set up workshops for youth and disabled people in his community to learn how to make soap. Since ICS, Paul has also taken on the role of secretary at his local Disabled People's Organisation.

"I realised how high the unemployment rates were for the youth and disabled people in the local area. Whilst there is training available for the elders, there is nothing for the youth or people with disabilities. I wanted the youth and disabled people to gain quality skills that could put an end to the vicious cycle of unemployment."

Diversity and inclusion

ICS is committed to providing volunteering placements for all young people, regardless of their background. We believe that diverse groups of volunteers working together makes a greater impact.

We understand that everyone is different, and that young people seek out new opportunities through a variety of methods. We also understand that many young people can face a number of barriers in accessing international volunteering opportunities. We work hard to market our opportunities through a range of routes, making sure we are able to reach a diverse audience, and are constantly improving our processes and systems to remove barriers to participation. We provide additional support to young people where they need it.

Challenges Worldwide ICS



Matthew, 19, from Brighton was always worried his dyslexia would hold him back from getting ahead, yet his volunteer placement with Challenges Worldwide opened new doors for his personal and professional development. Working with a solar enterprise in Lusaka, Zambia, Matthew gained the skills and experience to successfully obtain a Chartered Management Institute qualification.

"Before ICS I didn't know where I was going. I thought I'd end up working the same dead-end jobs. I didn't like where I was. Now I'm back, and as for my future goals – the sky is the limit. I'm not afraid any more. By the time I'm 30 I want my own NGO. You can hold me to that."

Fidelity Foundation research

We are always looking to improve our recruitment practices, particularly in how we recruit a diverse group of participants. After recognising the higher-than-average early dropout rates from applicants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, we were able to secure funding from the Fidelity Foundation to carry out a piece of research in to how we market ICS opportunities appropriately. This included the messaging we use, our website and the application process. The learnings from this are being incorporated into our marketing plans, and will help us to ensure we continue to offer accessible and inclusive opportunities.

IVO4all

During 2017 we attended events throughout Europe to showcase our work on the EU project International volunteering opportunities for all (IVO4all). IVO4all was a two-year project which focused on making international volunteering more accessible to those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. We shared the findings of IVO4all in events held in six European cities including Rome, London and Brussels. The findings focused on creating accessible opportunities, and inclusive programmes that attract diverse participants. We not only highlighted examples of good inclusive practice from ICS, but also shared the ICS approach to quality assurance to assess key elements of the international volunteering such as volunteer support and accessible learning.

Mental health research

Awareness and diagnosis of mental health needs is an area that has seen significant developments in recent years, and we have seen that reflected in the number of volunteers who declare current or historic mental health needs to us. To ensure we are able to effectively support these volunteers, we commissioned a piece of research in partnership with Lancaster University. The focus of the research was to help us to understand the impact mental health conditions have on a volunteers experience on a placement, and what support is most effective in ensuring volunteers have a positive and successful placement. We will be sharing our research findings in summer 2018.

Active citizenship

ICS volunteers continue to advocate for change beyond their placement. Action at Home projects enable ICS volunteers to facilitate social change in their own communities, harnessing their own interests alongside skills developed on placement.

This year, we launched the Action at Home Hub, an online area for ICS volunteers to continue to be inspired about the countless possibilities for actions available once returning from placement, learn from previous actions delivered by fellow returned volunteers, and get support in delivering it.

We also launched the ICS Newsletter to share opportunities and information with ICS alumni around the world.

This year, we launched National Youth Engagement Networks (NYEN) in six countries: Nepal, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Zambia, Ghana and India. These youth-

led networks provide platforms for ICS alumni and community youth to engage with decision-makers on the social actions most important to them. In Bangladesh, NYEN members ran a campaign challenging gender-based violence and harassment on local transport. The campaign received significant local community support and national media coverage.

The ICS Alumni Grant is available for in-country volunteers looking to make a difference in their own communities following their ICS experience. In 2017, 22 grants were given, aiming to impact over 4,700 individuals in 10 countries. Projects have included raising awareness of gender-based violence in slums, sensitising communities to the Sustainable Development Goals, and increasing access of sexual and reproductive health and rights information for young girls. The Alumni Grant is funded through UK volunteers' surplus fundraising.

Restless Development ICS



At six years old, Usaama moved from Uganda to the UK with this family. As an immigrant leaving a country of extreme poverty, the plight faced by refugees has always been close to his heart. Following his ICS placement, Usaama spent a year volunteering with the British Red Cross in Greece, supporting the many young and unaccompanied refugees living in shelters across Athens.

"I was lucky when I arrived in the UK to be welcomed with the chance of a full education as well as every opportunity to succeed and integrate into European society. My Restless Development ICS experience was an incredible few months that made me the global citizen I am today. Now I am able to help elsewhere – supporting the many young and unaccompanied refugees living in refugee shelters across Athens."

Tearfund ICS



Inspired by his ICS experience, Rwandan Tearfund ICS volunteer Emmanuel, partnered with three other ICS alumni to start Green Saves, a project supporting Tanzanian refugees in the Rwandan capital of Kigali.

"ICS changed my life. I was lucky to win ICS Alumni Grant funding. Along with three other volunteers, we started a project called the Green Saves, helping vulnerable refugees in Kigali start a new life, through training them about self-help groups, nutrition and making kitchen gardens."

Media and marketing

In 2017/18, ICS marketing generated over 28,500 applications from young people from a diverse range of backgrounds, ensuring ICS remains an inclusive programme for all. We continued to build partnerships with organisations such as NCS and designed communications that appeal to a wide range of young people.

A refreshed ICS website helped improve our engagement and accessibility with volunteers and applicants. The new website shares stories from across the ICS volunteer journey, showcasing the different ways young people can make an impact, whether it be on their placement, or after as active citizens when completing their Action at Home.

Our media work reached over 55 million people worldwide, through respected outlets such as the Guardian, Telegraph and The Times.



Three ICS volunteers were featured on BBC News live from their placement in Nepal on Christmas Day talking about their ICS experience and work in community in education, just one of the positive 705 pieces of media coverage promoting ICS during the year.

This year ICS won the prestigious Lovie Award and 'Video of the Year' at the British Media Awards for our immersive 360° video "What will your day bring?" following ICS volunteer Naseem on his volunteer journey and how it impacts his life.

The year ahead

Continued focus on inclusion of all

During the pan-European evaluation of IVO4ALL, Ernst & Young described ICS as '*by far the most advanced scheme in terms of inclusion*'. We will continue to challenge ourselves to become more inclusive and diverse. In 2018 we will put the spotlight on disability as we work on increasing the representation of disabled participants in ICS.

Celebrating our successes

Having supported over 30,000 young people to volunteer on the ICS programme, there is ample opportunity for celebration, showcasing and sector learning. Recognising that we have amassed a fantastic array of skills, knowledge and experience in all areas of youth volunteering, a series of youth-led activities will be delivered from March - August 2018 in the UK and across ICS host countries. The events will create a space for young people to celebrate their achievements with ICS, raise their voice and share their priorities for youth volunteering for development and lifelong active citizenship. More information can be found on the ICS website and on social media with #ICS4Change.

Effective collaboration

All ICS projects contribute to wider development programmes. For the three countries (Nepal, Tanzania and Uganda) where more than one ICS agency will be working in 2018-19 we will develop ways to collaborate more closely to achieve ever greater impact and stronger ICS networks of alumni at national level.

Changing face of the consortium

The UK government has extended the current phase of ICS, providing funding for 3,000 further placements in 2019. VSO will continue to lead ICS, working in partnership with Raleigh International and Restless Development.

The work of all ICS partner agencies has been integral to the global success of our programme and we reflect back on this shared achievement with a great sense of pride for the way ICS agencies have valued, supported and promoted youth volunteering for development.



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