



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**



# **Voluntourism Best Practices: Promoting Inclusive Community-Based Sustainable Tourism Initiatives**

## **FINAL REPORT**

**APEC Tourism Working Group**

**February 2018**

## **Voluntourism Best Practices: Promoting Inclusive Community-Based Sustainable Tourism Initiatives**

**APEC Project:** TWG 01 2016A

Produced by:

Milne, S., Thorburn, E., Hermann, I., Hopkins, R., & Moscoso, F.

**New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, Auckland University of Technology**

55 Wellesley Street East

Auckland, 1010

Tel: (64) 9 921 9999 extension 8890

Email: [nztri@aut.ac.nz](mailto:nztri@aut.ac.nz)

Website: [www.nztri.org](http://www.nztri.org)

Prepared for:

**Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat**

35 Heng Mui Keng Terrace

Tel: (65) 6891 9600

Fax: (65) 6891 9690

Email: [info@apec.org](mailto:info@apec.org)

Website: [www.apec.org](http://www.apec.org)

Copyright © 2018 APEC Secretariat. All rights reserved. Printed in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. This publication is protected by Copyright and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to seeking any reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any forms or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or likewise.

APEC Publication number: **APEC#218-TO-01.1**

ISBN: **978-981-11-7220-5**

Cover image: Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority

Other images: New Zealand Tourism Research Institute

The information and recommendations provided in this document have been developed based on information available at the time of preparation and the assumptions specified within the final report. All care has been carefully considered to check and validate material presented in this report therefore independent research should be conducted before any action or decision is executed based on the material contained in this report. This report also does not seek to provide any assurance of project viability and the project team (led by Papua New Guinea) accepts no liability for the decisions made or the information provided in this report.

The views expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the APEC member Economies. The recommendations considered in this report may be further considered by relevant APEC fora.

## Contents

List of Acronyms .....	1
Glossary of Terms.....	2
Executive Summary .....	3
1. Introduction .....	5
Project Objectives, Scope and Outcomes.....	6
To achieve these objectives the APEC TWG.....	6
The activity has generated the following outputs: .....	6
Report Structure .....	7
2. Research Approach .....	8
3. Literature Review .....	11
What is Voluntourism?.....	11
The supply side: Organisations, Agencies and Facilitators.....	17
The Impacts of Voluntourism .....	21
4. Voluntourism in the APEC Region.....	24
Tourism in APEC.....	24
Trends in Voluntourism in the APEC region.....	27
Impacts of voluntourism on local communities in the APEC Region .....	35
People-to-people connectivity .....	37
Local alignment with voluntourism .....	38
Accreditation .....	44
5. Policy Recommendations.....	49
6. Bibliography.....	56
7. Appendices.....	61

## List of Acronyms

ABTA	Association of British Travel Agents
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ATTA	Adventure Travel Trade Association
CoGP	Code of Good Practice
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism
EVS	European Voluntary Service
FTL	Fair Trade Learning
FTT	Fair Trade Tourism
FTTSA	Fair Trade Tourism South Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IVPA	International Volunteers Program Association
MyNDS	Malaysian National Development Strategy
NBOS	National Blue Oceans Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NZTRI	New Zealand Tourism Research Institute
NMSRT	National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism
PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
RTT	Responsible Tourism Tanzania
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organisation
STNSA	Sustainable Tourism Network Southern Africa
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society
TWG	Tourism Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
USD	United States Dollar
VO-FAIR	Volunteer Fairly
VTP	Volunteer tourism projects
WYSE	World Youth Student & Educational
YOG	Year Out Group

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Domestic tourism**

Activities of a resident visitor within the region of reference.

### **Host organisation**

Receives the participant and provides guidance and instructions at a voluntourism project, either as a contractual local partner of the sending organisation or as a totally independent organisation.

### **Inclusive growth**

Inclusive growth as defined by APEC refers to economic growth benefiting all stakeholders with a focus on those poorest in society income rising proportionally. The economic benefits from tourism should be positively felt by the lower economic groups with income being able to sustain their households.

### **People to people connectivity**

Strengthening of people's collective culture, identity and heritage, and the transfer of skills and innovation across borders.

### **Sending organisation**

Organisations catering for the voluntourism market. They are generally but not always based in the home country of the participant. Provides information about the project and (ideally) takes responsibility for the recruitment of the voluntourist. Organises (to a varying extent) accommodation, travel, free-time activities, financial and visa advice.

### **Servicing organisations**

Act as brokers, mediators, agents or third-party providers that recruit, manage and support voluntourists through websites or umbrella organisations. Link clients to the sending and hosting organisations of voluntourism projects.

### **Tourist**

Someone who is making a visit to a main destination outside his/her usual environment for less than a year for any main purpose [including] holidays, leisure and recreation, business, health, education or other purposes.

### **Volunteering**

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, the environment or individuals outside of one's immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

### **Voluntourism**

The combined act of tourism and volunteering, where volunteer services are delivered free at the point of delivery at the destination. The duration of volunteering can last from a few hours to up to one year, and can be undertaken by domestic or international tourists.

### **Voluntourism Activity/Program**

A particular activity or longer-term program that voluntourists are involved in during their stay.

## Executive Summary

Voluntourism is a complex and diverse industry, covering a variety of activities in different cultural contexts. For the purposes of this Report, voluntourism is defined as: *the combined act of tourism and volunteering, where volunteer services are delivered free of charge at the point of delivery at the destination. The duration of volunteering can last from a few hours to up to a year, and can be undertaken by domestic or international tourists.*

Voluntourism is one of the fastest growing tourism niche markets in the world. Globally, more than 10 million voluntourists are estimated to have spent between USD 1.6 to 2.8 billion in 2016. Unfortunately there is little information about this niche sector in the APEC region, and not much is known about the challenges and opportunities that voluntourism brings to member economies.

This report focuses on the current trends, issues, challenges and opportunities facing voluntourism across the APEC region. It is informed by a review of relevant literature and secondary data. The report also draws on 73 surveys and 28 interviews conducted with those involved in the supply, governance and research of voluntourism. The report also incorporates inputs gathered from a one-day workshop conducted in Penang, Malaysia (9 October 2017) with key APEC tourism working group members and stakeholders.

Voluntourism has positive impacts on APEC communities, for instance in the protection of wildlife and the broader environment, and the contribution of tourist spend to local economies. Economic benefits can be enhanced by linking voluntourism activities to local supply chains in transport, hospitality, and tourism. There are also opportunities to enhance the short and long term value derived from voluntourism by better aligning programs to local needs and priorities.

The report shows that voluntourism enhances people-to-people connectivity via the sharing of skills and cultures; however this cross-cultural exchange must be actively facilitated to ensure positive inter-cultural understandings. In order to enable local communities to derive benefit from voluntourism we provide a series of recommendations that focus on: planning well, evaluating impacts, and regulating high-risk activities.

It is essential that voluntourism is *well planned* with communities, with local people being active partners in shaping the focus and outcomes of voluntourism activities. APEC and its various stakeholders can help to lift industry standards, by providing advice and helping to build networks that can share information on responsible voluntourism to communities, tourists, and voluntourism organisations. Feedback mechanisms should be encouraged to allow host communities to comment on how voluntourism is effecting them positively or negatively. It is recommended as a minimum standard voluntourism organisations must be required to provide evidence of the informed consent of the local community they are operating in.

In general, there is a lack of *data to evaluate the impacts* (both positive and negative) of voluntourism across the region. These information gaps must be filled to ensure any voluntourism policy generated is evidence based and adequately addresses key issues. In particular, there is a lack of data on *community perceptions* relating to voluntourism.

In addition to providing support for planning and lifting industry standards, there is a responsibility among government and the private sector to *shape demand* in a positive fashion. This involves providing better information to voluntourists and building awareness about a range of themes, including: how to select to a responsible voluntourism organisation and experience. The majority of the market for voluntourism activities is made up of students, this provides an opportunity to spread the word on responsible voluntourism via schools and tertiary institutions. In raising awareness of the complex issues surrounding voluntourism, and educating consumers about the need to seek ethical experiences, greater pressure will also be placed on the industry to raise standards in accordance with best practice.

*Some voluntourism activities are higher risk than others*, in particular activities that involve children, and these must be regulated appropriately to mitigate any risk. The report recommends that high-risk activities are closely monitored, and that member economies work closely with international organisations to minimise all risks to children posed by voluntourism activities.

When regulating or accrediting voluntourism there are important elements to consider, including: ensuring smaller operators are able to participate, and that there are resources to manage the scheme effectively and also monitor compliance. The local community's needs and interests must be placed at the heart of any scheme, with activities being tailored to meet locally identified needs. Such an approach will maximise the ability of voluntourism to bring sustained benefits to all stakeholders – communities, voluntourists, governments and business.

# 1. Introduction

Voluntourism is a growing global market that focuses on:

*The combined act of tourism and volunteering, where volunteer services are delivered free of charge at the point of delivery at the destination. The duration of volunteering can last from a few hours to up to a year, and can be undertaken by domestic or international tourists.*

Voluntourism can be a powerful tool for tourism and community development. The APEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) through this 'TWG 01 2016 Voluntourism Best Practices: Promoting Inclusive Community-based Sustainable Tourism Initiatives' activity seek to determine and initiate best practice in voluntourism across the APEC region. In particular, it is vital that local communities are able to fully benefit from all aspects of voluntourism.

This report complements recent APEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) projects to enhance inclusive growth through the sustainable development of the niche market of voluntourism. Inclusive growth as defined by APEC is 'growth in household incomes coupled with improvements in distribution'. It refers to economic growth benefiting all stakeholders with a focus on those poorest in society income rising proportionally faster (Andres, Cheok, & Othman, 2016, 15). Among other interventions, promoting cultural exchange programs and improving the visitor experience can assist in meeting the goal of lifting people out of extreme poverty (Andres, Cheok, & Othman, 2016).

The number of studies about the rise of this niche market in tourism has rapidly expanded. There is a need to share insights on best practices that will contribute to policy-making and the enrichment of living standards of local communities within the APEC region. The APEC TWG sit in a unique position to promote best practice voluntourism. Member economies are both among the largest sending regions (the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) and greatest receiving areas (Peru, Mexico, Thailand, the Philippines) of voluntourism.

If managed well, voluntourism can bring a range of social, economic and environmental benefits. Because voluntourism often takes place in communities that are removed from major tourism flows there is potential to generate growth that is more inclusive. However, when not done well, there can be unintended consequences that can effect both the community, host economy and the voluntourist negatively. This niche tourism offering must be developed appropriately, and be linked as much as possible to local economic development.

Voluntourism Best Practices: Promoting Inclusive Community-Based Sustainable Tourism Initiative aligns directly to the TWG Strategic Plan priority area, to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth by encouraging socially and culturally responsible tourism – in this case



voluntourism. By sharing best practice and promoting a better understanding of voluntourism, including through the APEC Voluntourism Workshop and APEC Guidebook on Voluntourism Best Practice, the initiative aligns with APEC TWG objectives to develop niche markets.

Voluntourism development is strongly aligned with implementing the APEC Blueprint on Connectivity (2015-2012), particularly people-to-people connectivity. Voluntourism has the potential to facilitate cultural exchange across APEC economies, enhance people-to-people connectivity and mobility, and aid in skill transfer. People-to-people connectivity aims to build a sense of affinity among the diverse peoples of the APEC region.

The year (2017) marked the UN Year of International Sustainable Development. In September 2015, the UN confirmed its support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through to 2030. Inclusive growth of the tourism industry in the Asia Pacific is linked to the UN SDG to eradicate poverty by 2030. The activity is directly aligned to this global aspiration, and complements a previous APEC project – Sustainable Development of Tourism Destinations (2014) and the development of common guidelines across member economies.

### **Project Objectives, Scope and Outcomes**

The TWG 01 2016 Voluntourism Best Practices: Promoting Inclusive Community-based Sustainable Tourism Initiative has three objectives:

- i) Share insights and best practices on voluntourism in the APEC region, including how it has contributed to the enrichment of local and indigenous communities.
- ii) Develop, collate and suggest policy recommendations on voluntourism regulation and accreditation for creating sustainable communities and enhancing people-to-people connectivity.
- iii) Produce an APEC guidebook on voluntourism best practices.

**To achieve these objectives the APEC TWG 01 2016 project scope includes:**

- A literature review on voluntourism.
- Interviews and survey (supply, management, governance, research of voluntourism).
- A one day APEC Workshop on Voluntourism Best Practices in Penang, Malaysia (9 October 2017).
- A post workshop survey with workshop participants (policy-makers and industry).

**The activity has generated the following outputs:**

- i) Workshop Slides and Workshop Summary Report.
- ii) Guidebook Voluntourism Best Practices in the APEC region.
- iii) Final Report.

This TWG 01 2016 project is undertaken by the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Core team members are Professor Simon Milne, Ms Eilidh Thorburn, Dr Inge Hermann, Mr Ross Hopkins and Ms Florencia Moscoso. The contract duration was approximately five months, from late July 2017 to late December 2017. A one-day Workshop on Voluntourism Best Practice was held in Penang, Malaysia on 9 October 2017.

## **Report Structure**

The long-term strategic goal of developing voluntourism best practice in the APEC region is to stimulate inclusive growth for local communities. This report details the research findings which sit behind the *APEC Voluntourism Best Practice Guidelines*, and suggests policy recommendations based on the research conducted over the course of the project. The report complements the *Guidebook on Voluntourism Best Practices in the APEC region* and the *APEC Voluntourism Post Workshop Summary Report*.

The report comprises five sections including the introduction. The following section briefly outlines the research approach that underpins the report and provides details of the data collection. In Section 3 we provide a detailed literature review that draws on existing research (academic, consultancy, and media). The review covers voluntourism trends, market and flows, infrastructure needed, impacts, and provides an overview of existing policies and regulations relating to the market niche.

Section 4 provides an overview of tourism statistics, and trends in voluntourism in the APEC region based on our research. Key findings relating to the impacts of voluntourism on local communities are discussed drawing on a mix of expert interviews and an online survey. This section also addresses regulation and accreditation of the industry.

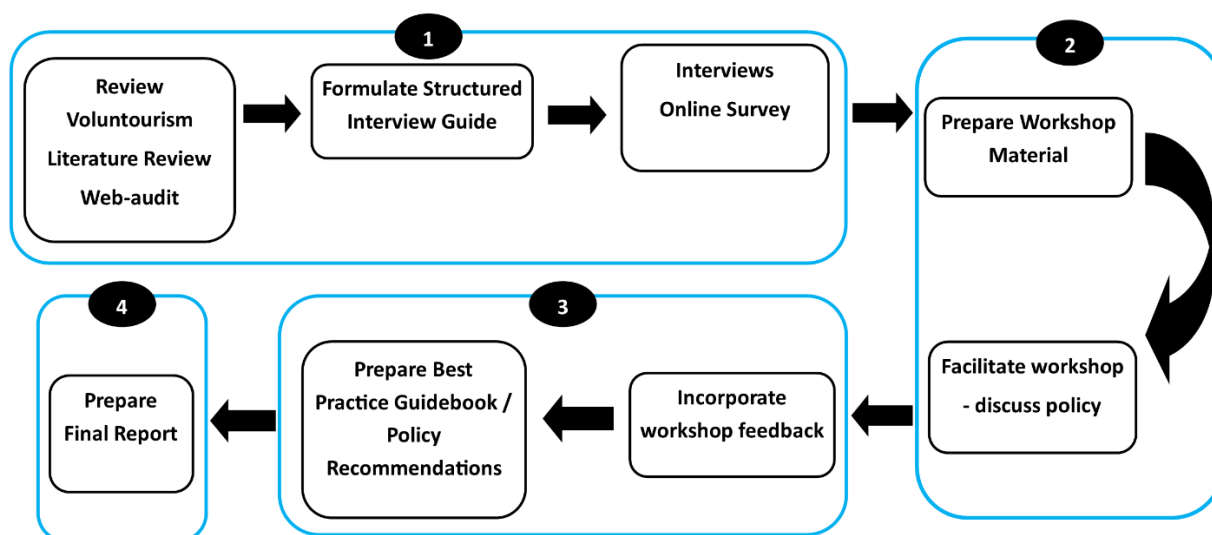
The final section of the report outlines key policy recommendations that emerge from the research findings, with a focus on enhancing people-to-people connectivity that creates sustainable benefits for all stakeholders. Possibilities to move forward with each recommendation are put forward for consideration.

The report also presents a series of Appendices. A bibliography of all the literature and secondary data sources consulted during this project (Appendix 1) is included as is an overview of existing voluntourism assessment schemes, guidelines and codes (Appendix 2). The Appendices also provide a listing of the top sending and servicing organisations that operate across the APEC region (Appendix 3) and an overview of the most popular voluntourism activities found in APEC member economies (Appendix 4). Finally, we provide the research instruments used (Appendix 5 and 6).

## 2. Research Approach

Figure 1 provides an overview of the overall approach to the project. Due to the highly contextual nature of voluntourism, a focus was placed on qualitative data to draw out themes and issues.

Figure 1: Approach to the APEC TWG 01 2016 Voluntourism Best Practice project



A comprehensive literature review included the collection of best practice examples, as well as an overview of existing codes, guidelines and frameworks relating to voluntourism. Information from 34 organisations was obtained focusing on elements such as certification program, accreditation scheme, assessment application, and self-assessment (Appendix 2). A web audit identified 251 organisations who offered 1408 voluntourism experiences across the APEC region. A database was collated which was used to draw out trends in voluntourism in the APEC region. Information analysed included the type and the aims and objectives of the organisation, headquarter location, geographical research, and the types of voluntourism activities.

Interviews and survey methods were utilised to gain expert perspectives on the key challenges and opportunities facing voluntourism across the APEC region. Semi-structured interviews captured the experiences and perceptions of different stakeholders involved in the voluntourism industry, including: voluntourism organisations/NGOs/non-profits, tourism government agencies, members of the APEC TWG as well as academics who study voluntourism across the region. The potential participants were identified through an online analysis and suggestions from experts and other organisations.

Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and were undertaken by telephone/Skype or on occasion face-to-face, the average duration was 45 minutes. A total of 28 interviews were carried out. The interviewees covered representative from tourism/voluntourism organisations, NGOs, academic/research institutions, online platform for voluntourism/volunteering and online journalism/advocacy.

Expert insights were gained from across the world. Interviewees were based in New Zealand, United Kingdom, the United States, Thailand, Australia, Chile, Brazil, Canada, Israel and Mozambique. Interviewee's organisations operated across the APEC region, providing a good understanding of current trends, opportunities and challenges relating to voluntourism (Figure 2).

*Figure 2: APEC member economies – interviewees working knowledge*



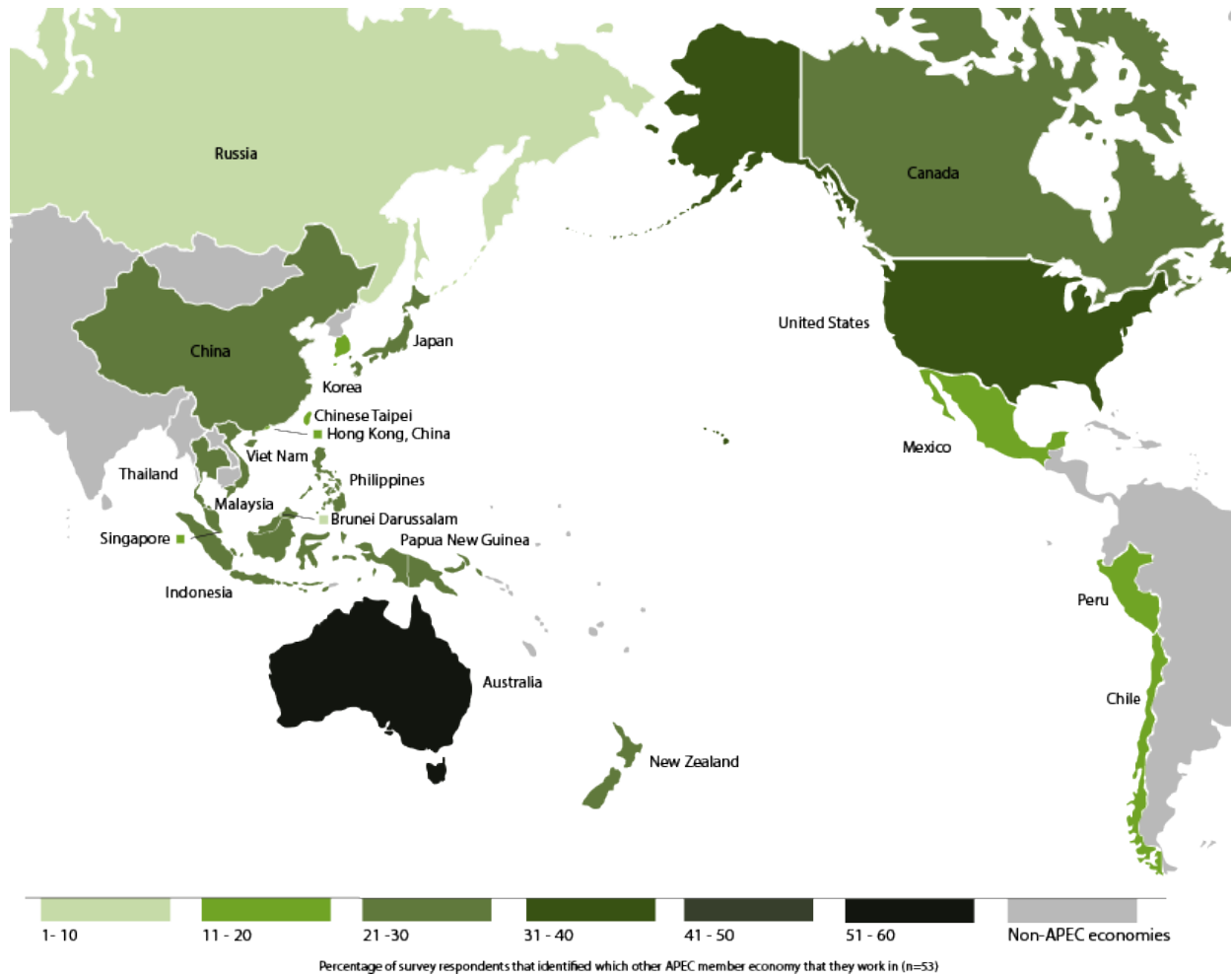
An online survey was undertaken to broaden the range of participants across the APEC region. The survey was sent to the collated database of 251 voluntourism organisations. It was also shared through various tourism networks and was sent to APEC Project Overseer to distribute to the Tourism Working Group (TWG). Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) also shared the link in their newsletter 'PATA Voice newsletter'.

The survey ran from 25 August to 24 October 2017 with 72 responses received from a range of key organisations including: NGOs (40%), Government organisations (22%), voluntourism organisations (18%), private tourism related business (15%) and universities (5%).

Over half of the survey respondents are in management positions, with 36% being a Director/CEO or Founder of the organisation. Ten percent of survey respondents are

involved in voluntourism research. There is an even gender split between male and female respondents. Figure 3 shows the APEC member economies where the organisations/institutions are based, or where their activities mostly take place. The survey gathered information from 19 APEC member economies.

*Figure 3: Survey Respondents – APEC Member Economy Coverage*



In addition to the above data sources, information was also gathered to inform this report during the one-day workshop with APEC stakeholders in Malaysia (9 October 2017) to discuss preliminary findings and potential policy implications. A short feedback survey was distributed to workshop participants. All nineteen participants gave feedback including useful inputs on technical and policy frameworks for voluntourism in the region.

### 3. Literature Review

#### What is Voluntourism?

Voluntourism, combines leisure travel and varying levels and degrees of voluntary activities by participants at destinations around the world. Some aspects of voluntourism have been practiced for several decades, if not centuries. Our contemporary understandings of this phenomenon have gained momentum with the establishment of numerous operators and host organisations and a rapid increase in the number of individuals taking part in organised volunteer activities during their holidays.

Growing numbers of mostly young people are signing up for volunteer programs abroad to travel and have a holiday, while at the same time making contributions to social and environmental initiatives through voluntary work. Traditional volunteer programs focus on the needs of local communities, with organisations selecting volunteers based on their skills and experience. However, voluntourism projects are often characterised by short-term, flexible activities which are mainly decided by the tourists themselves and, despite a genuine desire to help those in need, focus strongly on the traveller's search for new travel experiences and obtaining beneficial skills for the future (Sherraden et al., 2006).

The term 'voluntourism' was first coined in 1998 by the Nevada Tourism Board and was linked to a campaign to develop rural tourism (Clemmons, n.d). While it is not easy to clearly define voluntourism, the growing literature does provide some guidance:

- Volunteer tourism is “the conscious, seamlessly integrated combination of voluntary service to a destination with the traditional elements of travel and tourism” (Clemmons, 2012).
- Volunteer tourists are “those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that may involve the aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment” (Wearing, 2002, 240).
- Voluntourism is “organised and packaged tourist trips with a duration of a few hours to a year in which the main purpose is to work as a volunteer. The volunteer provides their 'work' within the destination free of charge at the point of delivery” (Association of British Travel Agents, 2016, 8).
- Voluntourism = “Holiday adventures including the feeling of doing good” (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism, 2015, 6)

Voluntourism has close links to related tourism concepts including, moral tourism, social tourism and goodwill tourism. The result is a wide range of volunteer tourism (and related) labels, including 'volunteer vacations' (McMillion, Cutchins & Geissinger, 2006), 'mini-

missions' (Brown & Morrison, 2003), 'pro-poor tourism' (Ashley, Roe & Goodwin, 2001; Hall, 2007), 'altruistic tourism' (Singh, 2002), 'philanthropic tourism' (Novelli, 2015) and 'service-based vacation' (Ellis, 2003).

The *ABTA Volunteer Tourism Guidelines (2016)* state that voluntourism is characterised by four key elements:

- Travel experiences that are purchased as part of a package that includes flight, accommodation and/or other elements of the trip (e.g. work placement).
- The opportunity for tourists to 'work' while on a trip.
- The expectation that work is delivered by the tourist free of charge at the point of delivery.
- The concept that the work of the traveller (or volunteer) does will benefit the recipients and the tourists at the point of delivery.

Not everyone views voluntourism in a positive light, and some have expressed concerns that a lack of regulation may leave negative impacts in the industry's wake (McGehee, 2014). Although visitors may benefit a host destination in many ways through for instance the contribution of money and skills, there can be a diversity of negative implications for the voluntourists, the recipient communities, and the host organisations. Such impacts are wide ranging but can include power disparities and other unintended negative consequences that activities may produce for instance the reinforcement of stereotypes, taking jobs from the local community, or the disruption of day-to-day operations (Conran 2011; Mostafanezhad 2014).

Callanan and Thomas (2005) present a conceptual framework that classifies volunteer tourism projects (VTPs) and volunteer tourists across three categories: shallow, intermediate and deep (Table 1). 'Shallow volunteer tourism' projects and organisations promote the *experience* to be gained from the activity, rather than the benefits to the local community. They tend to offer short-term assignments for the participant, and do not require specific skills or qualifications. The volunteer project itself is promoted as secondary to the broader tourism experience and little or no pre-project training is provided. Those who participate in 'shallow voluntourism projects' are likely to be concerned with self-development, career enhancement and leisure activities, and usually volunteer for three weeks or less. This 'shallow' focus has led to the development of 'voluntourism' as opposed to 'volunteering abroad'.

At the other end of the spectrum, 'deep volunteer tourism' projects and organisations seek individuals with specific qualifications, actively encourage longer participant timeframes and provide pre-departure training material of the project itself. Travellers are committed to providing serious aid through sharing their experiences and skills within volunteer projects (Brown, 2005). 'Intermediate volunteer tourism' lies somewhere between the deep and shallow extremes.

**Table 1:** A conceptual framework for volunteer tourism projects (adapted from Callanan & Thomas, 2005).

	<b>Shallow VTP</b>	<b>Intermediate VTP</b>	<b>Deep VTP</b>
<i>Flexibility in duration of participants</i>	High degree of flexibility and choices for volunteers	High degree of flexibility and choices for volunteers	Time periods typically determined by the organisation rather than the volunteer
<i>Promotion of the project rather than the destination</i>	Strong promotion of the destination and additional travel opportunities	Promotes the project within the context of the destination	Strong emphasis on the project, the activities, the local community, the area, and the value of the project to the area
<i>Targeting volunteers-altruism vs. self interest</i>			
<i>Markers</i>	Promotes the experience and skills to be gained with specific reference to academic credit	Promotes the experience and skills to be gained with specific reference to academic credit, as well as the contribution to the local area	More focus on the value of the work to the local community and area. Promotes cultural immersion, intrinsic rewards and reciprocal relationships
<i>Skills/Qualifications of participants</i>	No/limited skills required	Skills are not required but desirable	Focus on skills, qualifications and time
<i>Active/Passive participation</i>	Passive	Moderate	Active-immersion in local area
<i>Level of contribution to locals</i>	Contribution of volunteers is limited on an individual basis but collectively can be of value to the local area. Limited information provided on local involvement in decision-making	Contribution of volunteers is moderate on an individual basis but collectively can be of value to the local area. Limited information provided on local involvement in decision-making	Contribution of volunteers is explicit with a direct impact on the local area. Clear information on how locals are involved in the decision-making process of the project

Voluntourism takes place on a continuum, with voluntourists participating for various reasons ranging from self-interest to altruism. Similarly, there are a multitude of programs and activities offered, conducted over a range of timeframes via multifarious management structures.



Many travellers now seek a more authentic and meaningful travel experience that allows them to interact with the local community at a destination (Germann Molz, 2017). As a response, many organisations have differentiated their activities to cater to this shift in consumer demand, whether that means involving visitors in building a school, tracking sea turtles, or teaching English.

The 1990s saw a sharp increase in volunteer organisations that considered voluntourism as the major activity of their operations. From the 1990s a trend emerged alongside the growing interest in volunteer activities: many for-profit tour operators and travel agents started partnerships with volunteer host organisations to expand their range of activities and increase attractiveness to potential volunteer tourists. Volunteering found itself being commercialised with the volunteering experience becoming a form of goods and services sold by, both by for-profit and non-profit organisations (Coghlan & Noakes, 2012). Estimates indicate that over 800 organisations offer voluntourism experiences in 151 countries worldwide, and over 50% of the organisations are profit-making (ABTA, 2016; Tourism Research and Marketing, 2008). In a reflection of these trends, voluntourism has been described as ‘the commodification of altruism’ (Wearing and McGehee, 2013).

Over the past decade, voluntourism has become one of the fastest-growing forms of alternative tourism in the world. The niche market attracts more than 10 million consumers each year who are willing to pay to participate in volunteer projects abroad, with an estimated annual monetary value of between US \$1.7 billion and \$2.6 billion (Popham, 2015; Tourism Research and Marketing, 2008). The average spend per voluntourism trip is estimated to be US \$2,806 (ABTA, 2016).

Singh and Singh (2004, 182) provide a different explanation for voluntourists as: ‘post-materialist/post-modernist new tourists’ who find meaning in activities with others that “permit them to “feel good by doing good”. Voluntourists are those who have become “jaded with standardized package holidays and are searching for more alternative types of travel offering a range of experiences” (Callanan & Thomas, 2005, 183). Voluntourists are also influenced by the following factors: family and friends, environmental context and consciousness, past volunteering experiences, previous overseas travel, cultural experiences, and the search for alternative forms of leisure (Connor, 2011). A study by Brown (2005) concluded that the following four major motivational themes determine why people volunteer while on vacation: giving back (altruism), cultural immersion, seeking camaraderie (friendship), and seeking education and bonding opportunities.

Voluntourist motivations range from seeking to make a truly positive impact on a community, to obtaining a ‘cheap’ vacation with the ease of traveling in a group (Sin, 2009). Chen and Chen (2011) have separated the primary motives mentioned in previous research into three categories: (a) personal, (b) interpersonal, and (c) other factors to fit the diverse motives of voluntourists (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Categories and themes of volunteer tourists' motivations (adopted from Chen & Chen, 2011).

Categories	Themes
<i>Personal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Pleasure seeking / relaxation / travel</li> <li>→ Personal growth / professional development / career-building</li> <li>→ Adventure / stimulation / challenge</li> </ul>
<i>Interpersonal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Care for others / altruism / leaving a legacy / the desire to give back</li> <li>→ Cultural exchange / culture immersed</li> <li>→ Friendship / family</li> </ul>
<i>Other factors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Organisation mission</li> <li>→ Right time / places</li> <li>→ Project context</li> </ul>

Cross-cultural exchange is often noted as a key motivation of voluntourists (Chen & Chen, 2011; Wearing and McGehee, 2013a). For a cultural exchange to be positive, it must empower communities by having local people create the type of program that best meets their needs. It is also important that the power dynamic between voluntourist and host community members be equitable if positive cultural exchange is to occur. Sending and host organisations have a responsibility to *facilitate* this form of exchange, so that the program is also shaped as a learning process, and that cultural interaction is *actively facilitated between the community and the voluntourist* (Raymond and Hall, 2008).

Providing a voluntourism experience where the focus is on interaction with community members has been widely praised as an effective means to improve the tourism experience, increase cross cultural sensitivity, and reduce 'othering' of the host community – Wearing and McGehee (2013a, 125)

The majority of voluntourists are female with some reporting as high as three-quarters (70%-80%) of volunteer tourists are women (Tourism Research and Marketing, 2008; South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 2013; World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation, 2007). The largest market is the 20-25 age group consisting over 70% of voluntourists, with the second most significant cohort being Baby Boomers (those aged over 54 years) (World Youth Student and Educational Travel Confederation 2007; South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 2013). Seventy percent of voluntourists are students and over 90% of them study full time. Half a million voluntourism trips a year are made by young people (Tourism Research and Marketing, 2008; ABTA, 2016).

While the majority of the marketplace is young and are generally placed in the backpacker segment of the market, voluntourism is now also sold as 'luxury' travel. For example, the Ritz Carlton luxury hotel chain offers 'give back getaways', where voluntourists stay in luxury accommodation and donate a few hours of their time to help on a local project (Green Traveller Guide, 2010). Another growing segment of the market is family groups – who volunteer together (Germann Molz, 2017).

Voluntourism flows generally go from the global north to the global south. Africa, Asia, and Latin America account for over 90% of the locations offered by the volunteer tourism organisations (ABTA, 2016). However, there are also cases where voluntourism projects are conducted in the global north. Based on an analysis by Go Overseas (2014) regarding the number of searches for volunteering opportunities a relative list of the top 15 countries for voluntourism in 2014 were:

Philippines	Australia
India	Uganda
Thailand	Kenya
Nepal	Ireland
Cambodia	Brazil
South Africa	Haiti
Costa Rica	Japan
Viet Nam	

There are indications that the number of volunteer tourists increases after natural disasters at destinations. That Haiti and Japan are on the list of the top 15 places in 2014 reflects natural disasters in those countries at that time. This so called 'disaster volunteering' is noticeable in, for example, the South Pacific Island of Vanuatu. One of the few pieces of research that allows direct and robust comparison between general visitors and self-defined voluntourists is research by the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute (2016) in Vanuatu following Cyclone Pam. The number of international visitors identifying as visiting Vanuatu for the purpose of volunteering more than quadrupled after Cyclone Pam which occurred on 13th March, 2015 (NZTRI, 2016).

Because the United States hosts the largest number of sending organisations worldwide, they are often considered to be the main source market for voluntourists. Some estimates range to five million domestic and international voluntourists in the United States alone (Green Traveller Guide, 2010). Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and some European countries (in particular the UK and Germany) are also considered important source markets of voluntourists.

There is also a recent geographical shift in voluntourist flows moving from 'South-to-South'. In China, for example, voluntourism is gaining momentum among young Chinese, especially college students. What's more, a search on "voluntourism" on the most popular Chinese search engine Baidu returns over 3.4 million results. Besides Chinese organisations, many of the world's leading, fee-based voluntourism sending organisations today have their own Chinese language websites tailored to Chinese voluntourists.

### ***The supply side: Organisations, Agencies and Facilitators***

Steadily increasing demand has resulted in a variety of stakeholders that are involved (directly and indirectly) in voluntourism:

- Individual and groups of experienced or potential volunteer tourists;
- Volunteer tourism operators, for profit, and non-profits organisations including schools and faith based groups that plan and organise trips in alignment with their missions;
- Private travel agencies, tour operators, and online travel services;
- Airlines that provide discounts on travel;
- Volunteer tourism hosts, the non-profits or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that assist participants on volunteer projects at destination and communities;
- Volunteer tourism beneficiaries and local communities.

In the 1980s, when an increasing number of non-profit organisations began to organise and operate voluntourism programs, the cause and extent of volunteer activities were clearly defined; however they struggled to provide a good 'tour' component of the experience (Connors, 2011). Travel agencies became natural partners to provide these services, along with organising other elements of the trip such as travel arrangements, visa documents, airline tickets, accommodation and transportation.

These partnerships have grown over the decades as travel agencies became more familiar with the expectations of volunteer tourists, operators and host communities, and started to develop their own packages. With the growing demand, travel agencies (online) also introduced 'cause marketing' - offering discounted prices on tour packages for volunteer tourists and operators as a way of promoting their businesses along with a positive image of social responsibility.

The late 1990s saw a next level of assistance to volunteer tourism, particularly from the airlines and online travel services. Airlines started to offer discounts on air tickets or increased luggage allowances for volunteer tourists, providing savings up to 40% for people travelling for humanitarian or non-profit purposes (Skoog, 2010; Connors, 2011). Online travel services began to offer grants to volunteer tourists who could not afford to participate in (selected) volunteer projects without financial support. According to Marriot (1999), sponsored charity tours represent one of the fastest growing sectors of the holiday market (cited in Callanan & Thomas, 2005).

Tourism Research and Marketing (2008) divide organisations, agencies, and facilitators into three categories depending on whether they are sending, hosting or servicing participants on volunteer projects abroad:

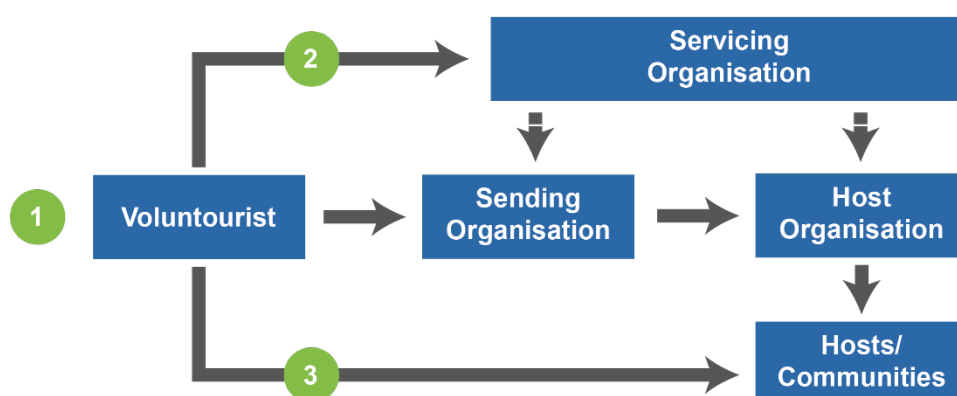
- *Sending organisations* are generally based in the home country of the participant, and provide information about the project and (ideally) take responsibility for the recruitment

of the voluntourist. These organisations organise (to differing degrees) accommodation, travel, free-time activities, financial and visa needs. They also communicate with (potential) hosting organisations and participants during their stay abroad, and (ideally) follow up with the participant after returning home.

- *Hosting organisations* receive the participant in the host community and provide guidance and instructions about the voluntourism activity. They operate either as a contractual local partner of the sending organisation or as a totally independent organisation. The hosting organisation often also provides support for voluntourists in the location, such as food, accommodation, free-time activities, contact with the local community and so forth. These organisations also address work-related needs including training, materials, safety instructions, and insurance. They often partner with volunteer servicing organisations to attract volunteers.
- *Servicing organisations* (for example [www.goabroad.com](http://www.goabroad.com), [yearoutgroup.org](http://yearoutgroup.org)) act as brokers, mediators, agents or third-party providers that recruit, manage and support international volunteers through websites or umbrella organisations. They provide volunteers to the sending and hosting companies or organisations of volunteer projects. In most cases, servicing organisations host an online portal featuring voluntourism opportunities. They market and sell a variety of activities that are available through various sending and hosting organisations.

The voluntourist chain outlines three different routes through which a domestic or international tourist gets involved in voluntourism (Figure 4). A voluntourist (1) may use a sending organisation, which is often based in their country of residence. This organisation links the volunteer to an in-country organisation (who can be attached or independent of the sending organisation) who organises the volunteer program/activity. The voluntourist (2) can go via a servicing organisation to select a sending or host organisation who they then deal directly with to organise their trip. The voluntourist (3) engages directly with the local or in-country organisation, they can do this while at home or while travelling independently.

Figure 4: Voluntourism Chain



As with any form of tourism, there must be adequate infrastructure to accommodate growth in voluntourism. The majority of voluntourism receiving APEC member economies are located in the Asia-Pacific region. Both international and domestic tourism growth in the Asia Pacific is set to put pressure on tourism infrastructure. The Asia Pacific region accounts of 80% of international air passenger movements, with international tourists from outside the region accounting for 61% of air travel (UNWTO, 2016). There has been a boom in low cost carrier travel across the region, while travel by land is declining. Although airport infrastructure is on the increase, it is projected that this will not keep up with demand. This is particularly the case for South-East Asia with a deficit of 29.4% projected through to 2020 (UNWTO, 2016). However this shortfall in air infrastructure will somewhat be made up for in rail and road, with large investments supported by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) among others.

Significantly, more accommodation is needed to meet demand at its projected growth by 2020, particularly in North and South East Asia which account for 87% of additional room requirements within the Asia Pacific region. It is noted that advances in technology for example Airbnb will take the pressure off more traditional forms of accommodation.

Adventure tourism and voluntourism tend to require less hard infrastructure (road/rail/hotels/airport) than mass tourism and more soft resources (trail maps, information, local guides, interpreters, eco-lodges) (Adventure Travel Trade Association, 2016). In Vanuatu, travel arrangements for volunteers were largely made by other businesses, friends or relatives, rather than through a travel agent or via a website (New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, 2016).

A significant difference between the voluntourist and the ordinary holiday tourist in Vanuatu was the number of companions, with the large majority of holiday visitors having one

companion, and the majority of volunteer visitors coming in groups of 10 or more (New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, 2016).

Prospective participants of volunteer projects are not limited to the offers of the sending or servicing organisations, there is also a wide variety of volunteer projects directly advertised by host organisations at the destination. Previously, volunteer activities were mostly linked to non-profit organisations but over the past two decades there has been a substantial growth in for-profit companies and organisations entering the volunteer tourism market. Some companies are charitable organisations, but there is an increasing number of purely commercial organisations (Benson, 2011). Each stakeholder has certain roles and responsibilities in order to create mutually beneficial voluntourism projects. General observations can be made about the enabling conditions and barriers to good practices in volunteer tourism projects (VTPs) that involve multiple stakeholders (Table 3). These include building effective partnerships that can both meet the needs of the community and the volunteer (Wearing and McGehee, 2013).

**Table 3:** Enabling conditions and barriers for volunteer tourism projects (VTPs)

Enabling conditions for good practices	Barriers to development
All alternative constructions to enhance sustainable and inclusive growth are thoroughly examined and discussed, before VTPs are enacted.	Decision-making is based on short-term strategies and a quick fix to move out of the poverty cycle.
There is a strong focus on the interrelationship between people's lived experiences within the community and the VTP.	The VTP does not align with the community's values and principles and does not offer the community a choice in how it is developed.
The VTP addresses the needs of the local community within existing structures to ensure benefits for all.	The VTPs priority is to cater for the needs and benefits of the participant or the organisation, rather than the local community.
There is a pragmatic approach to practical values and attention to facts of the impacts, options, risks and outcomes for the community.	There is an unrealistic view of the project's impacts, options, risks and outcomes for the community.
The marketing and recruitment efforts are in line with and based on the needs of the local community.	The marketing efforts generate an inaccurate image of the local community and the reason for the VTP.
There are strong relationships with local NGOs, community leaders, relevant government bodies and other parties involved in the VTP.	Weak relationships between organisations the community and the local government, based purely on financial transactions.
The messaging strategies clearly convey the goals, importance and impact of the VTP for the local community, and portray the community in a fair manner.	Messaging strategies reinforce notions of poverty and advertising belittles or degrades the local community.

There is a proactive assistance to match participant's interests, skills, budgets and availability with a certain project.	Little or incomplete guidance is offered to the voluntourist during the orientation and selection phase, and the VTP does not match their skills or experience.
An independent assessment system is in place to ensure the VTP performance, progress and impacts meet the community needs on an ongoing basis.	The project is not assessed by an independent third-party, and its impacts on the local community are not evaluated informally or formally.
Measurements have been put in place to remove participants from a project when showing inappropriate or unethical behaviour.	The customer (volunteer) is always right.
Consistent methods are implemented to calculate and report the financial impact of donations, funds and participant contributions to support the project and the local community.	There is no regular and transparent reporting regarding the financial support for the VTP and the local community. It is not clear where the money goes or 'who benefits'.
Information on the short- and long-term impacts are made available for all those involved in or affected by the project.	There is no information available on the short- or long-term impacts of the project.

## The Impacts of Voluntourism

There is a relative lack of research on community impacts relating to voluntourism (Wearing and McGehee, 2013a). There is a need for further research into the relationship between host and guests in different voluntourism settings. Like any form of tourism, voluntourism must be culturally appropriate and socially sustainable (McIntosh & Zhara, 2007). Recently, McAllum and Zhara (2017) conducted research with four impoverished communities involved in voluntourism in the Philippines. Focus group research was undertaken and the findings reveal that the communities had a positive experience, and a large part of this was because cross-cultural exchange and conversations were actively facilitated which built trust between the communities and the voluntourists.

In order to assess the impact of voluntourism, transparency is needed relating to the flow of money that is spent by volunteer tourists, both prior and during their stay at a specific location. This is required to determine whether voluntourism has a positive impact on the local economy, workforce, inclusion and standards of living for the local community (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2014). A close and critical examination of the benefits from activities that voluntourists provide is necessary to determine the impacts on the local community or environment (Zahra & Mc Gehee, 2013). For example, projects that provide new buildings, access to clean water and sanitation, access to medical services, education as well as imparting vocational skills are often promoted as tools to improve social well-being and over time reduce dependency on services as local capacity increases (Singh & Singh, 2004).

Table 4 illustrates the most commonly recognised positive and negative impacts of volunteer tourism projects and activities. It is important to take into account that when investigating



these impacts, and others, projects and activities are as diverse as any other sector, and what is gleaned on a case-by-case basis cannot be generalised across all communities and contexts.

**Table 4:** Positive and negative impacts of volunteer tourism on the community.

Positive impacts	Negative impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interaction between volunteer tourists and local community can result in increased and lasting cross-cultural understandings and people-to-people connectivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlights the differences and hence, widens the rift between the developed and developing communities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourists may better see the connection between local actions and global effects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourists may drain valuable resources that might otherwise go to the local community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourists may increase their understanding of international issues by seeing them directly (border issues, environmental issues, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If not properly briefed before visiting, stereotypes can be reaffirming and volunteer tourists' behaviour can negatively impact and offend the local community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourists may return home inspired to get more involved in environmental or social issues and support these types of organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As with mass tourism, by imposed, ineffective or unwarranted - or if carrying capacity is exceeded - exploitation of local communities, resources and environments may occur</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourism may offer the opportunity to improve competences, skills of volunteer tourists and local communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourist activities may be conducted in a way that negatively affects outcomes and impacts and undermines the expertise of the local community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourists may have a more positive economic impact on host communities than mass tourists through more direct injections of resources into communities and less leakage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An environmental of dependency may arise as residents begin to rely on volunteer tourists to provide economic support for their communities, creating 'markets of need' that cater for volunteer tourists</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourists are able to subsidise projects in areas with minimal government and private financial resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourism may negatively influence perceived dignity and self-esteem among residents</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourists provide services in areas that are currently not available or affordable for a local community or in communities that do not have a culture of volunteerism among local residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The environment of dependency and despondency may be transferred to the next generation thereby affecting local employment and displacing local workers and local expertise</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers a differentiation of economic opportunities and increase in income within local communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer tourism projects may contribute little to local communities as participants do not engage with other local services and activities</li> </ul>

Source: adapted from McGehee and Andreck (2008, 22)

Research on voluntourists economic impact on destinations is scarce and somewhat contradictory. Some authors argue that this group spend less at the destination than other

tourists (Gray & Campbell, 2007) while others contend that voluntourists spend more with high yield returns of US 3000 per trip (South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 2013).

NZTRI research (2016) on the links between Cyclone Pam and voluntourism in Vanuatu indicated that international visitors, who stated that volunteering was the main purpose of their visit, spent approximately US\$30 less per day than the normal holiday visitor. However this same group stayed significantly longer (four days more) and thus generated nearly the same spend per trip as other visitors (Holiday visitor US \$1,219/ Volunteer US\$1,191 per person per trip). Volunteers were also much more likely to visit outer-islands and remote communities and to spend more time there (approximately double the amount of time in outer islands compared to holiday visitors).

An often cited negative impact of voluntourism is 'othering' and the reinforcement of pre-conceived notions and stereotypes. Several authors argue that voluntourism is a form of neo-colonialism with the volunteers acting as 'white saviours' (Low, 2017). However this running critique positions the community as victims, with no agency, something that McAllum & Zahra (2017) challenge in their research.

As Barker (2014) argues, there is a role to play for everyone in the process of fostering positive change in and through voluntourism. In doing so, we need to look at the minimum due diligence, careful planning and management from all those involved in a volunteer tourism project or activity. Communication between stakeholders, and in particular from organisations, about the reasons or motives to engage in volunteer tourism projects or activities in a particular destination is one of the main concerns.

Positive impacts can only be achieved if one's involvement contributes to local efforts that are initiated, monitored and supported by the local community. In order to ensure a strong collaboration with the local community, there is a need to identify the needs and priorities of each of the stakeholders and establish clear tools to measure the impact of a specific volunteer project on those affected.

Positive impacts can further be ensured if volunteer tourism projects and activities are based on specific areas of needs in which volunteers can contribute to the larger and ongoing goals of the local community. When organisations inform both volunteers and host communities about possible issues and concerns prior, during, and after the experiences, they can facilitate cross-cultural understandings, mutual respect and people-to-people connectivity. In practice, this is done through sharing experiences and knowledge about special and expert skills, and can ultimately lead to more equally sustained relationships; either in return trips to the same communities, exchange programs or continuous support from the home country. In the longer term, this implies that volunteer projects can minimise community dependence and offer ways to support self-reliance and economic prosperity.

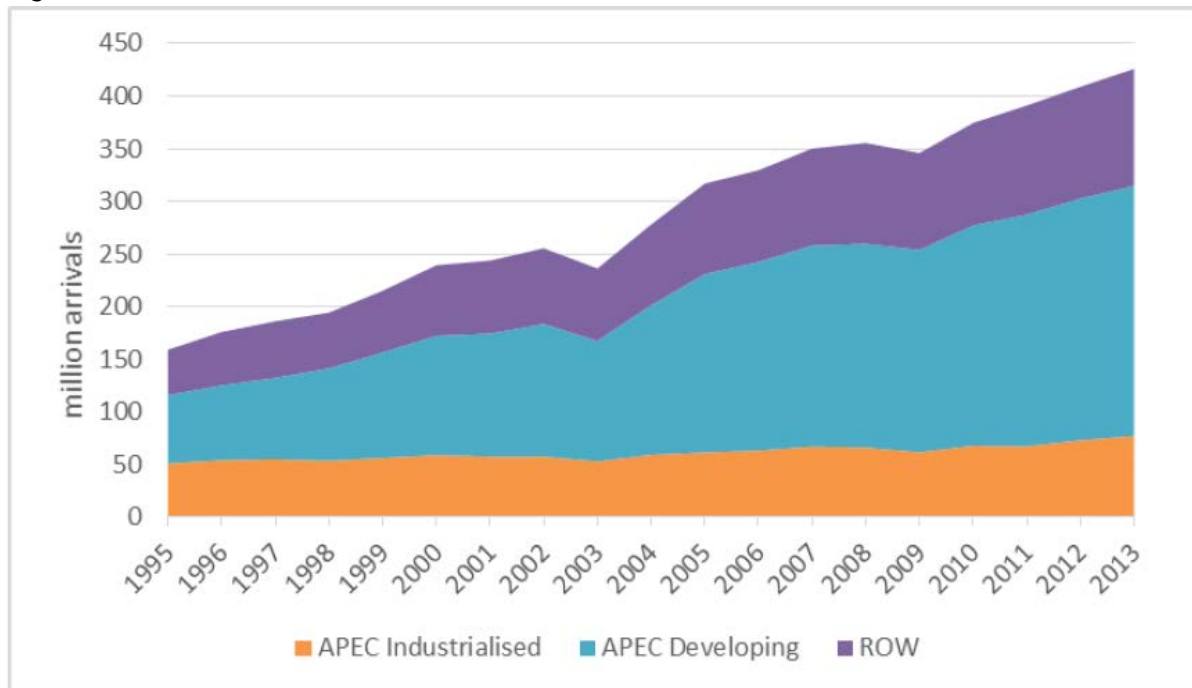
## 4. Voluntourism in the APEC Region

### Tourism in APEC

Voluntourism takes place against the background of increasing travel movements both across the world and within the APEC region. The APEC region makes up a significant part of the world economy, with roughly 57% of world economic output being generated by the 21 APEC member economies. These economies also make up a large portion of global travel, APEC member economies generated more than 40% of total international tourist arrivals worldwide and generated more than 40% of world visitor exports in 2010 (Salter, 2012).

The share of arrivals to 'APEC developing economies' has expanded greatly in the past two decades, with exponential growth in tourist arrivals for these economies from 1995 to 2013 (Figure 5). For 'APEC industrialised' economies, there is a steady but slow growth in tourist arrivals. It is predicated by 2022 that tourism in the APEC region will boost GDP and employment, creating an additional 8.9 million jobs across APEC economies related or linked to tourism (Salter, 2012).

Figure 5: APEC tourist arrivals, 1995-2013.



Source: Andres, E, A, S., Cheok, D., and Othman, L. (2016).

International tourism arrivals across APEC rose from approximately 354.3 million in 2013 to 398.5 million in 2015, with international tourism receipts increasing by 1.2% over the same period. Consequently, the increase in both tourism arrivals and receipts led to a steady rise in international tourism expenditures (Table 5).

Table 5: Tourism in the APEC Region

Indicators	2013	2014	2015
International Tourism Arrivals	354,266,300	377,408,200	398,509,800
International Tourism Receipts (% of total exports)	5.3%	5.9%	6.5%
International Tourism Expenditures (% of total imports)	5.3%	6.2%	7.0%

Source: APEC Tourism Indicators

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the Asia Pacific region is the second most visited destination in the world after Europe, receiving 279 million visitors in 2015, almost one fourth of the world total (UNWTO, 2016). Growth of arrivals has been consistent over the past six years and the pace of growth outstrips the global average (by 2%).

Intra-regional travel is significant in the APEC region - making up almost three quarters of international tourism arrivals (Andres, Cheok, & Othman, 2016). Table 6 shows the most recent tourism arrivals and the change in tourist receipts and expenditures across each APEC economy in 2015. The most visited member economies were the People's Republic of China followed by Russia and Mexico. Thailand recorded the highest international tourism receipts, followed closely by the United States and Peru. Papua New Guinea registered the lowest international tourism receipts followed by Brunei Darussalam.

International tourism expenditure as a percentage of total imports was recorded as being highest in the People's Republic of China, closely followed by Russia and the Philippines, while Viet Nam and Japan registered the lowest percentage of international tourism expenditure as a percentage of total exports (Table 6).

Table 6: Tourism Statistics APEC Economies 2015

APEC economies	International Tourism Arrivals (000)	International Tourism Receipts (% of total exports)	International Tourism Expenditures (% of total imports)
Australia	7,444,000	13.2%	10.7%
Brunei Darussalam	218,000	2.1%	9.4%
Canada	17,791,000	3.3%	5.6%
Chile	4,478,000	4.5%	3.5%
People's Republic of China	56,886,000	4.7%	14.3%
Hong Kong, China	26,686,000	7.0%	3.9%
Indonesia	10,407,000	7.1%	5.9%
Japan	19,737,000	3.5%	2.9%
Korea	13,232,000	3.0%	5.2%
Malaysia	25,721,000	8.4%	5.6%
Mexico	32,093,000	4.6%	3.0%
New Zealand	3,039,000	-	-
Papua New Guinea	184,000	0.0%	3.6%
Peru	3,456,000	10.4%	5.2%
Philippines	5,361,000	8.9%	13.5%
Russia	33,729,000	3.4%	13.7%
Singapore	12,051,00	3.2%	4.9%
Chinese Taipei	10,439,800	4.2%	-
Thailand	29,923,000	17.6%	4.2%
United States	77,510	10.9%	5.4%
Viet Nam	7,994,000	4.2%	2.1%
<b>Total APEC</b>	<b>398,509,800</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>

Source: Andres, E, A, S., Cheok, D., and Othman, L. (2016).

Tourism makes up 8.5% of the Asia-Pacific region's gross domestic product (GDP) (Choong, 2017). Tourism in this region earned US \$418 billion of global tourism receipts, almost

double from 2000 (+17%), and the spend in the region is above the world average (UNWTO, 2016).

By APEC member economy in 2015, the People's Republic of China was the largest earner and receiver of arrivals in Asia (USD 114 billion / 57 million arrivals), followed by Thailand (USD 45 billion / 30 million arrivals) and Hong Kong, China (USD 36 billion / 27 million arrivals) (UNWTO, 2016).

Intra-regional travel in the Asia Pacific is important, and accounted for 80% of the Asia-Pacific's region total arrivals. Inter-regional travel made up the remainder, with 12% arrivals from Europe and 6% from the Americas (UNWTO, 2016).

### **Trends in Voluntourism in the APEC region**

Despite strong growth in the voluntourism market internationally, there is a general lack of data on supply-side trends in the APEC region. In order to fill this gap an audit of online resources was undertaken during October 2017 in order to identify the nature of voluntourism supply in the APEC region.

Overall, 251 volunteer organisations (sending, host and servicing) were identified across the 21 APEC members economies (Table 7). A number of the organisations operate in more than one APEC economy. The analysis focused on organisations that send voluntourists to APEC member economies and host organisations for each APEC member economy that both send and receive voluntourists.

A comparatively large number of organisations operate in Thailand, reflecting, in part, the fact that this is the only host economy that provides a complete list of NGO and non-profit organisations offering voluntourism within its economy.

Table 7: Estimated number of voluntourism organisations (sending, host and servicing) operating in APEC economies

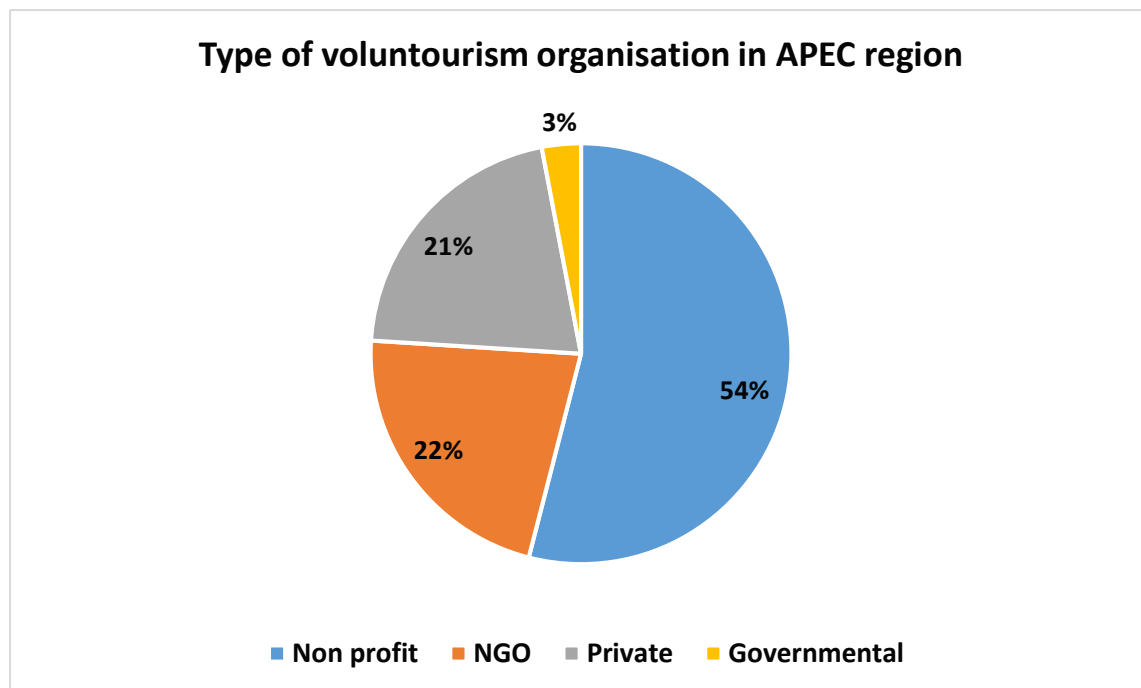
<b>APEC member economies</b>	<b>Number of Organisations</b>
Thailand	104
Peru	48
Viet Nam	48
People's Republic of China	50
Philippines	35
Australia	36
Indonesia	36
Malaysia	32
Mexico	30
United States	28
New Zealand	27
Japan	22
Singapore	20
Russia	19
Hong Kong, China	17
Korea	16
Chile	21
Chinese Taipei	13
Canada	13
Papua New Guinea	14
Brunei Darussalam	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>634</b>

Some researchers (Wearing & McGehee, 2013) have found a relationship between the type or organisation and its involvement in the local community. For example, for profit driven organisations tend to be more focused in the satisfaction of the voluntourist than in the

positive impact that the activities generate in the host community, while NGOs and non-profit organisations are said to have more engagement in sustainable community development. Lupoli, Morse, Bailey and Schelhas (2014) suggest that large organisations and/or those organising longer trips place a stronger emphasis on social and community impacts. Their study shows that the emphasis placed on economic and environmental impacts is dictated by the geographic nature of the organisation (local vs. international).

Based on our web audit a large number of organisations in APEC correspond to 'non-profit' (54%) and 'NGO' (22%). Less significant in terms of numbers are 'private' (21%) and 'government' organisations' (3%) (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Type of voluntourism organisation in the APEC region



Most of the private voluntourism sending organisations are headquartered in the United Kingdom and the United States and in some cases in Germany, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These findings are in line with the literature showing that the majority of voluntourism flows the global north to the global south.

Malaysia stands out from other APEC member economies as having the highest proportion of public sector/governmental voluntourism initiatives focussed on receiving international and domestic voluntourists. For example, the National Blue Oceans Strategy (NBOS) serves as the basis of the Malaysian National Development Strategy (MyNDS). One focus of the NBOS is promoting domestic and international volunteering. To achieve this goal, different programs have been established that focus on youth, community development, social integration, housing and nature conservation.



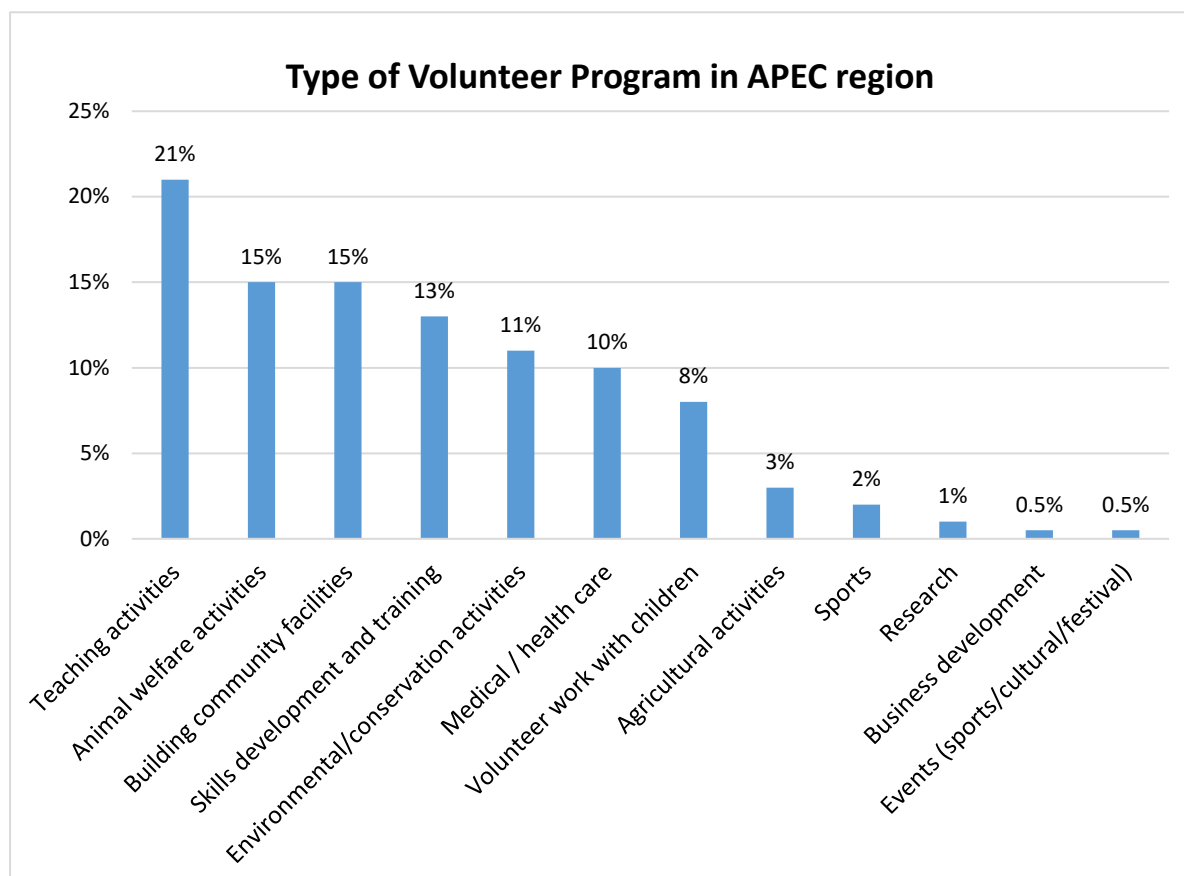
Other APEC economies such as Australia; Hong Kong, China; Chinese Taipei; Papua New Guinea and the United States have official government websites associated with volunteering. For example, the Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), launched in March 2018 guidance on 'Smart Volunteering' (available at (<http://dfat.gov.au/smartvolunteering>)) and information is also available on DFAT's Smartraveller." . Hong Kong, China; Papua New Guinea; Chinese Taipei; and the United States have government run volunteer services websites. This data reflects the nature of the industry being reliant on cross-sector collaboration, including government, NGO, and commercial organisations (South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 2013).

Servicing organisations often comprise online search directories and platforms that offer a wide range of voluntourism experiences. These directories and platforms are linked to private organisations - many of which provide voluntourism packages including the accommodation, meals, cultural activities, transfers and insurance. Well known examples include 'Go Overseas' ([www.gooverseas.com](http://www.gooverseas.com)) and 'Go Abroad' ([www.goabroad.com](http://www.goabroad.com)). These servicing organisations gather and promote many volunteer experiences provided by different organisations in different countries.

An analysis of the top sending volunteer organisations to APEC economies reveals that in excess of ten sending organisations work in at least ten of the twenty-one APEC economies. More than a half of the voluntourism organisations (sending and servicing) are private sector, with the second most frequent being non-profit organisations. The top 21 voluntourism organisations listed (Appendix 3) provide a wide range of experiences, with the three most frequently offered activities across the APEC region being 'teaching activities', 'animal welfare activities' and 'building community facilities'.

Based on our web audit of the APEC region the most frequently offered voluntourism activities to emerge can be categorised as: 'Building community facilities', 'Teaching activities', 'Skills development and training', 'Environmental/conservation activities', 'Medical/healthcare', 'Volunteer work with children', 'Agricultural activities', 'Sports', 'Research', 'Business development', 'Events (sports/cultural/festival)'. Figure 7 outlines the most commonly offered type of activity across the APEC region.

Figure 7: Type of Volunteer Activity / Program APEC Region



Note: each organisation has more than one type of program.

The majority of the organisations offer a wide range of programs and volunteering experiences. From 1,408 analysed programs, the most prevalent type of volunteering in the APEC region is 'Teaching activities' (21%). This type of program is largely related to teaching a foreign language (mostly English) in non-English speaking countries and assisting in teaching classes. A large number of teaching activities are found in Thailand; Viet Nam; People's Republic of China; and Peru. In APEC member economies such as Thailand and Papua New Guinea teaching activities typically relate to providing education about environmental and animal conservation, ecotourism, climate change, HIV/AIDs, primary health, music, arts and computers programs. Appendix 4 outlines the most popular voluntourism activities broken down by APEC member economy.

'Animal welfare activities (15%) consist of animal rescue, animal sanctuary and protection. Member economies such as Australia; Malaysia; and Thailand offer sea turtle conservation programs. Other economies such as Malaysia and Thailand focus largely on elephant conservation, usually in sanctuaries, while the People's Republic of China typically offers panda conservation. Malaysia and Indonesia have a higher concentration of activities relating to the protection of orang-utans. There were also a considerable number of activities

relating to domestic animals such as shelters for dogs and cats, especially in the case of Thailand which has many activities focused on domesticated animal care.

A further 15% of the programs relate to 'Building community facilities' such as housing or infrastructure development. Some programs in this category also encompass community activities and social work such as preparing meals and clothing donations, assisting in fundraising and developing activities to support families in local communities.

The 'Skills development and training' (13%) category focuses on upskilling provided by volunteers in different areas of an NGO and in non-profit and private organisations. Most of these activities are linked with the volunteer's skill base, their academic and professional career (e.g. marketing, medicine, hospitality, business, science, etc.).

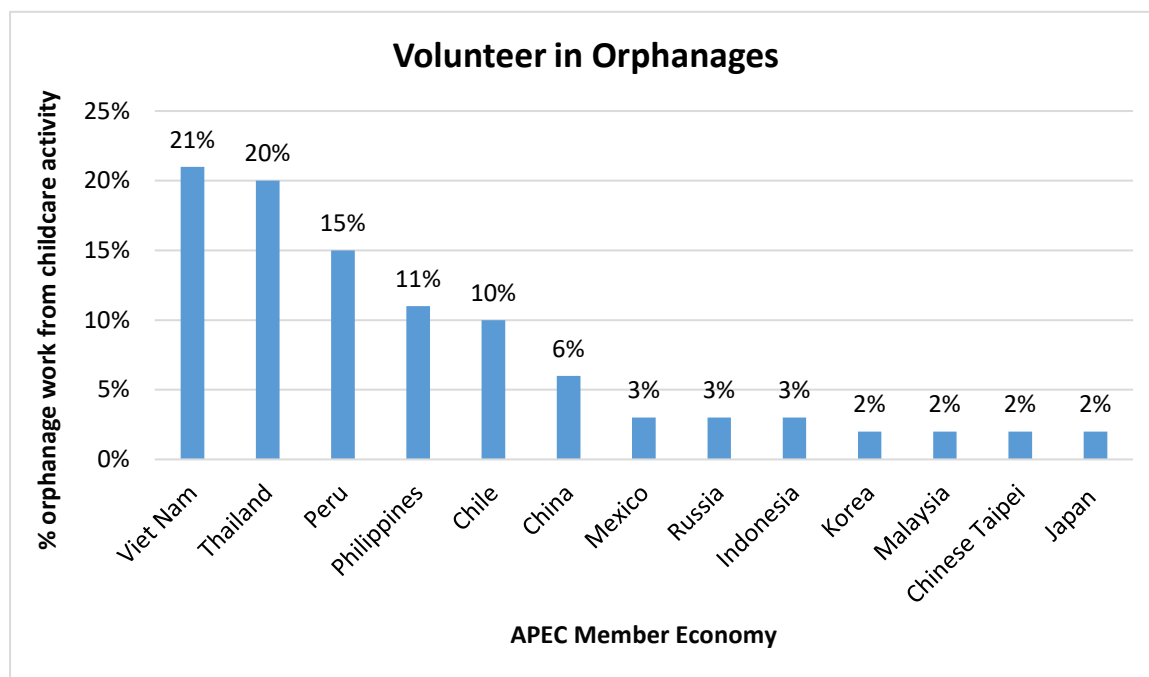
'Environmental/conservation activities' make up to 11% of the voluntourism activities identified in the APEC region. These activities are mostly related to revegetation, nature conservation and wilderness restoration. A common activity in this category is research assistant work, such as counting specimens for scientific conservation research projects.

'Medical/healthcare' makes up ten percent of voluntourism activities in the APEC region. Some organisations look for volunteers with appropriate skills who can offer medical services.

Small numbers of programs are related to 'Agricultural activities' (3%) such as volunteering on organic farms, 'Sports' (2%), usually coaching activities, 'Research' (1%), 'Business development' (0.5%), and 'Events' (0.5%).

Volunteer work with children, represents 8% of the total of programs. The activities in this category are mostly focused on kindergarten and childcare. One hundred and twelve childcare activities out of 1,408 programs across the APEC region were found. Of the total activities relating to childcare, volunteer work in orphanages represented a high number (79%). Viet Nam, Thailand and Peru were identified as having the highest frequency of orphanage related voluntourism activities (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Voluntourism in orphanages APEC Region

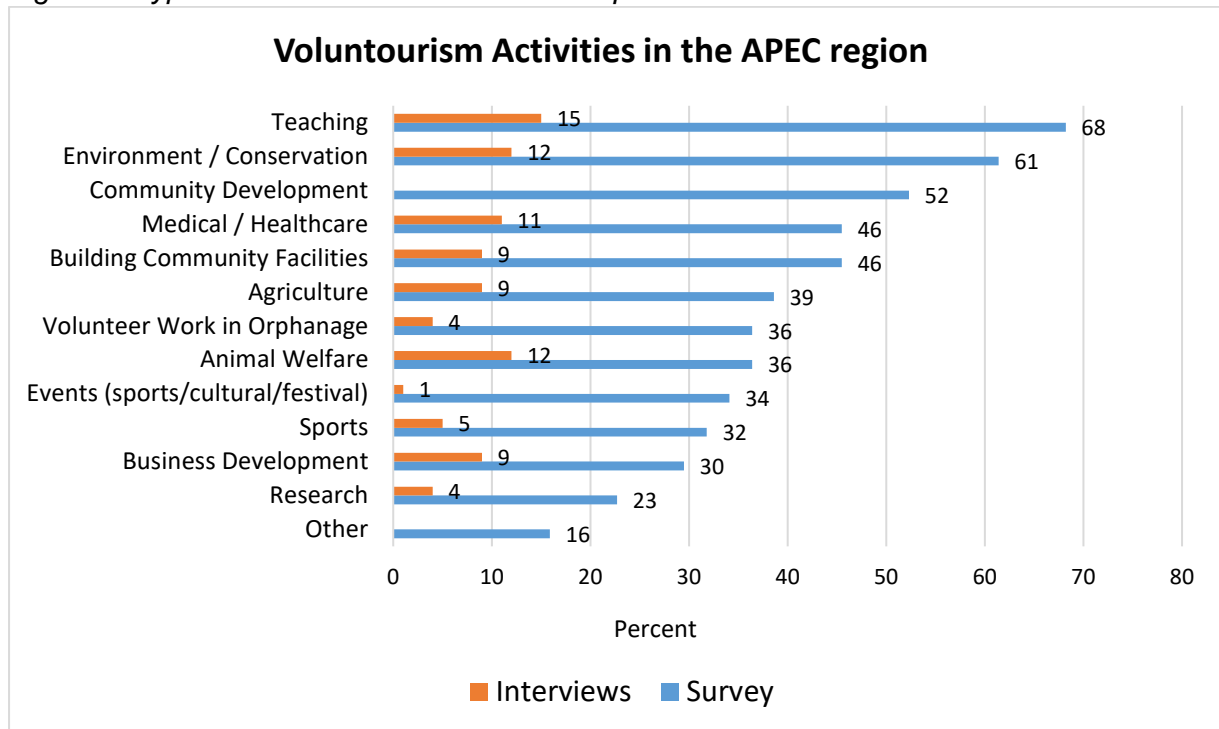


Some programs promote cultural exchange as an extra benefit that the voluntourist will experience. For example, the organisation Carpe Diem Education ([www.carpediemeducation.org](http://www.carpediemeducation.org)) is an international gap year provider and offers a cultural experience along with service education. For example in Nepal programs are offered to work alongside grassroots organisations and assist with small scale agricultural activities. Other options learn about NGOs and various projects that are working towards women’s empowerment. Furthermore, Hong Kong, China; Thailand; and Viet Nam specify voluntourism activities related to the arts and heritage conservation. For example, ThaiCraft.org is an independent host organisation that promotes handcrafts from villages and communities artisans across Thailand and receives volunteers to assist with customer service, marketing and sales.

In Latin American APEC member economies (Chile; Mexico; and Peru), there are many voluntourism activities involving indigenous communities, such as living and working with a host family (Maya, Huilloc, Shipibo, Mapuche) in the construction of facilities and agricultural projects. For example, a voluntourism experience in Pucallpa Peru involves living with a Shipibo family and it is organised directly with the families offering couch-surfing to visitors. One host organisation in Canada offers voluntourists the experience to live with a Shuswap indigenous community. Voluntourism activities with this indigenous community include housing improvements, healthcare provision, agricultural assistance, education and environmental conservation.

Research participants (both interviewed and surveyed) confirmed that teaching activities are the most frequently offered voluntourism programs in the APEC region (Figure 9). Environmental conservation is another frequently offered activity in the APEC region. Participants also highlight high-risk activities, such as healthcare/medical and animal welfare activities. Thirty-six percent of survey respondents and 4% of interviewees identified volunteer work in orphanages as a voluntourism activity in APEC member economies. Several participants stressed that volunteer work in orphanages is the highest risk activity in terms of possible exploitation and harm.

Figure 9: Types of voluntourism activities take place in the APEC member economies



The majority of participants feel voluntourism is *primarily a holiday experience* that also involves volunteering activities. Voluntourism is seen as a commercial product that is often undertaken for a short time period. Importantly, our research reinforced that voluntourism is not one thing, rather it is myriad continuum of experiences that can fall in-between the poles of volunteering and tourism. Voluntourism can be both domestic and international, short and long term, skilled and unskilled and cover a vast number of activities, across various geographical places. As one survey respondent noted:

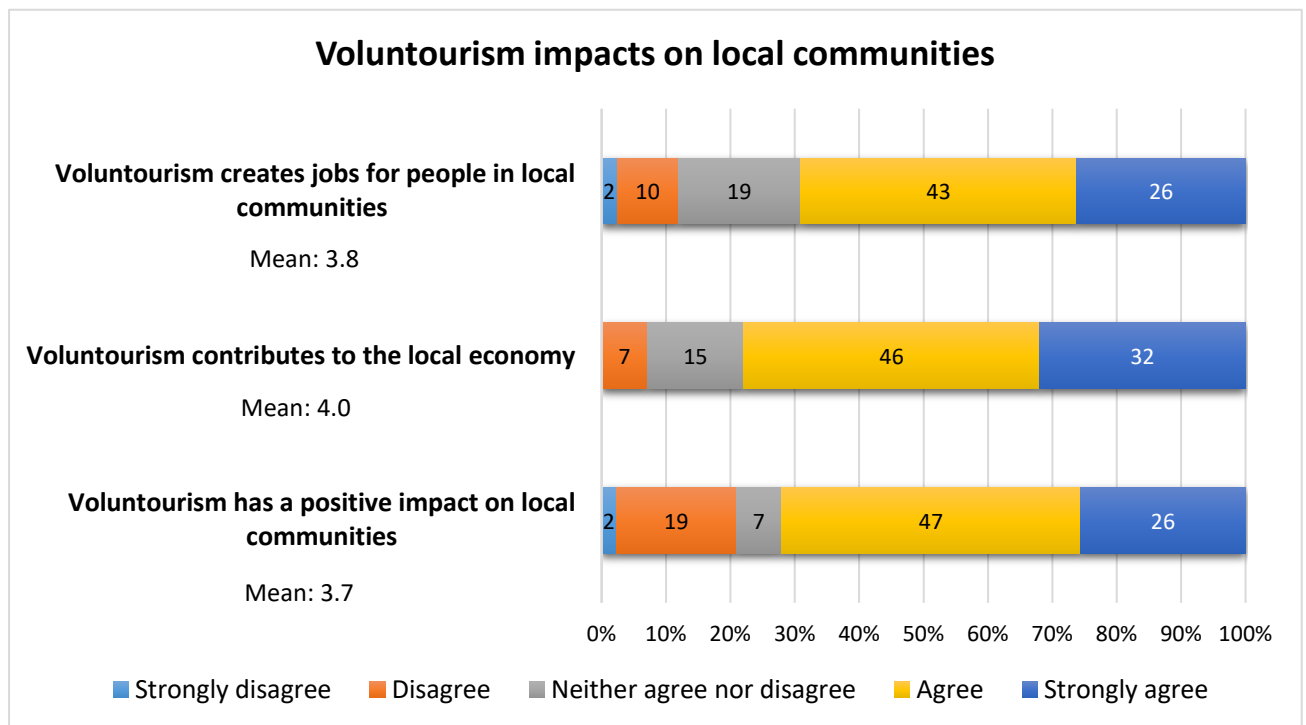
The range from experiences are as different and vast as any other industry. There is great disparity in quality and experience as there is in going to a fast food restaurant versus a fine dining experience. Simplifying voluntourism and making wide spread observations about it can be damaging. – Sending Organisation

## Impacts of voluntourism on local communities in the APEC Region

Survey respondents were asked about the impacts that voluntourism has on local communities in the APEC region (Figure 10).

The majority of respondents (73%) commented that voluntourism had a positive impact on local communities in the APEC region, with 26% being in strong agreement. However, there were reservations voiced by over a fifth of respondents that voluntourism did not have a positive impact.

Figure 10: Voluntourism impact on local communities



A large majority of respondents (76%) think that voluntourism contributes to local economies with a minority being in disagreement (7%). Interviews backed this with a highly ranked positive impact being the ability for voluntourism to contribute to local economies. However as one sending organisation noted, it is important for firms to ensure local economic linkages are created.

Voluntourism organisations have a real responsibility to ensure they are recognising and linking to local tourism operators with good sustainable practices – Sending Organisation

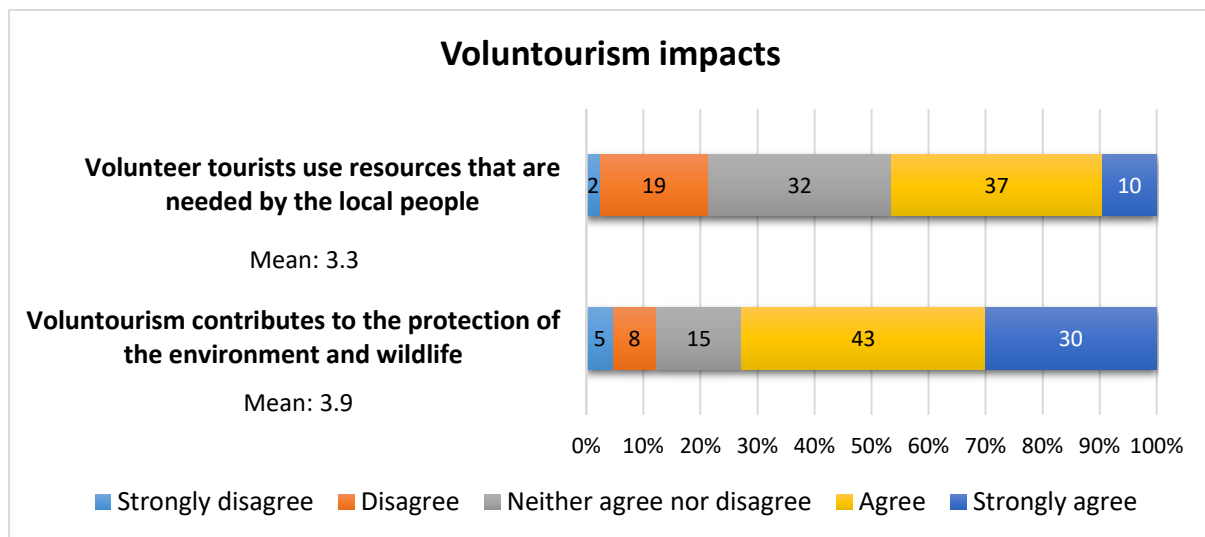
Participants are less sure about the impact that voluntourism has on local employment creation. Almost one fifth of respondents disagree (ten percent disagreed and two percent strongly disagreed) that voluntourism creates jobs for local people, yet the majority are in

agreement (43% agree/ 26% strongly agree). The interviewees are evenly split between feeling that voluntourism creates employment and that it can take away jobs from local people.

Overall there is a positive feeling that voluntourism contributes to the well-being of local host communities. Around one fifth (21%) strongly agree and almost half of respondents (48%) agree – with 17% disagreeing. The interviews support this with the positive impacts of voluntourism raised being community development and enhancing the standard of living. However, several interviewees did feel strongly that voluntourism as its currently managed is unsustainable, short term, and in some cases creates a dependency, rather than empowering communities. These opposing views again point to the fact that it is difficult to generalise and making sweeping statements about voluntourism impacts given the contextual nature of activities and different individual experiences with them.

A majority (68%) of respondents feel that voluntourism contributes to the protection of wildlife and the environment. Of the remainder, 14% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Voluntourism impacts



Almost half of survey respondents (46%) think that voluntourists use resources that are needed by the local people, 21% disagreed and the remainder neither agreed nor disagreed. Interviews reflected similar outcomes with participants commenting that a negative impact of voluntourism is the drain it can place on local resources.

Voluntourists can be a resource drain, in some cases they use more than they contribute - Researcher

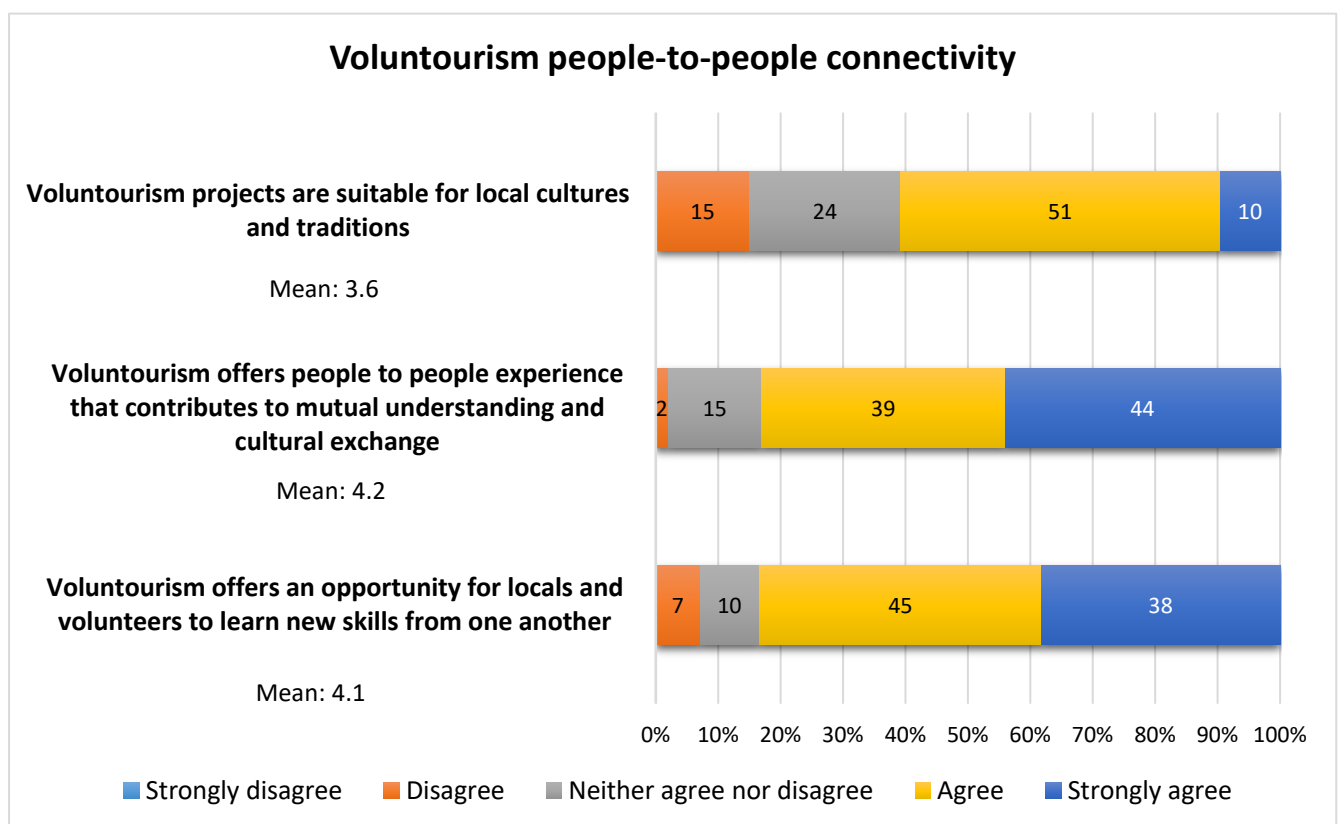
## People-to-people connectivity

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions relating to voluntourism's ability to contribute to people-to-people connectivity in the APEC region (Figure 12).

Most respondents (83%) agree that voluntourism offers an avenue for locals and volunteers to learn new skills from one another, indeed over one third (38%) are in strong agreement. A minority disagree (7%).

Cross-cultural exchange is rated by all participants as one of the most positive impacts of voluntourism. Also noted as a key benefit of voluntourism are skills development, education and international networks.

Figure 12: Voluntourism and people-to-people connectivity



Over three quarters of survey respondents feel that voluntourism offers a people-to-people experience that contributes to mutual understanding and cultural exchange, of this majority, 43% are in strong agreement. A small minority disagree (2%).

In order for voluntourism to contribute positively to people-to-people connectivity in the APEC region, projects must be culturally appropriate to their settings. When survey respondents were asked if they think that voluntourism projects are suitable for local cultures and traditions, half of respondents agreed that they are. However, 14% disagree and over one



fifth neither agree nor disagree (24%). Concerns were raised during some interviews about voluntourism leading to cultural insensitivity and a general lack of understanding of other cultures and ways of life.

Voluntourism is seen to have a potentially mixed impact on people-to-people connectivity. A strong majority think that cross-cultural exchange is a positive impact of voluntourism. However when not well planned and managed, participants say that voluntourism can diminish the dignity of local people by portraying them as poor, helpless and requiring outsider help. This problem is compounded if there is little voluntourist training or preparation.

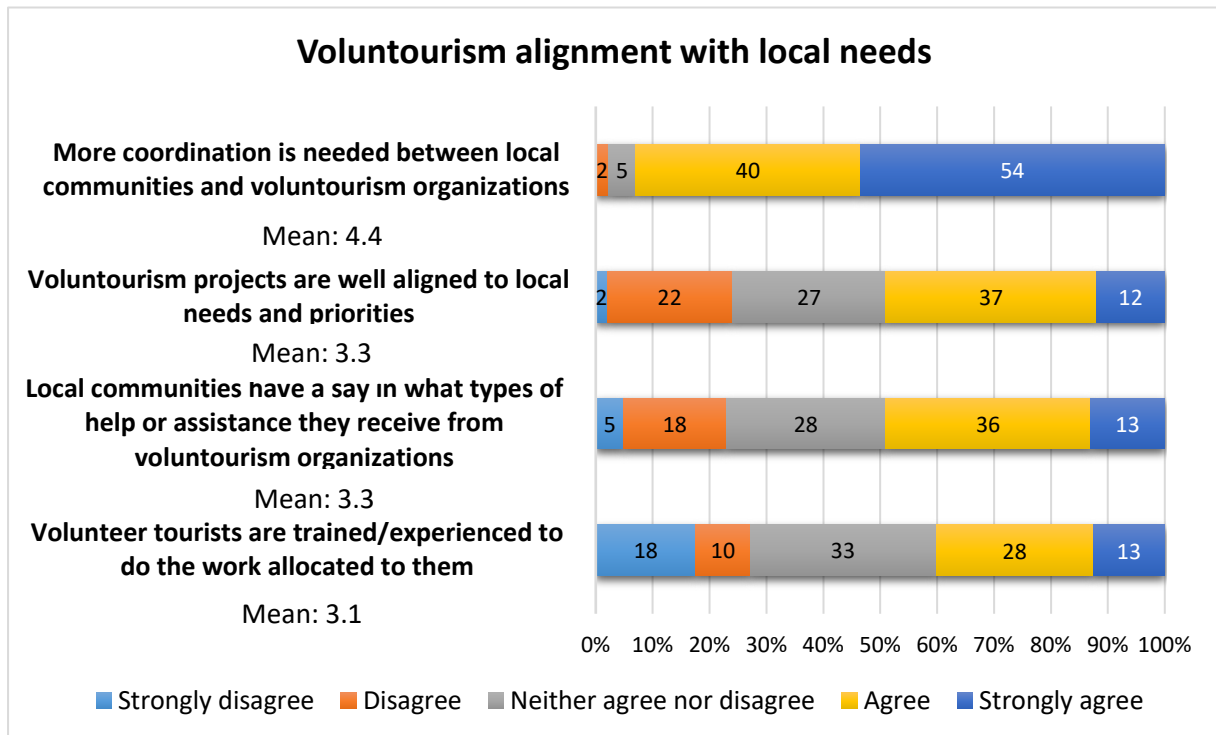
An interviewee notes that cultural exchange is a positive outcome but only because it is facilitated as a learning exchange.

Voluntourists go over and learn, and come back to their own countries and advocate for change. Set up to be learning exchanges, setting up people to be advocates. Understanding the systems of poverty, and global connections. Voluntourism used that way can be empowering. - NGO

### ***Local alignment with voluntourism***

For best practice to be achieved, it is essential that voluntourism activities are well aligned to local needs (Figure 13). A majority of those surveyed strongly agree (54%) that more coordination is needed between local communities and voluntourism organisations, and a further 40% agree.

Figure 13: Voluntourism alignment with local priorities



Under half (48%) of participants agree that projects align with local needs, while over one fifth (21%) disagree and 26% neither agree nor disagree.

A frequent criticism of voluntourism is that volunteers are not well equipped to do the work assigned to them. Having untrained and unskilled volunteers can lead to tangible damage, for instance by providing the wrong advice, or doing things that local people would be better equipped to do themselves. Having unskilled volunteers used as free labour is raised as a potentially negative impact issue.

Taking jobs from local communities, I've heard of people painting orphanages and filling holes in roads, labour intensive work that anyone or it in the local community could do or could be trained to do. - NGO

Although there seemed to occasional anecdotal evidence, we found no robust evidence or tangible examples of local job replacements by voluntourists during our research.

Survey respondents were asked if they thought that voluntourists were sufficiently trained or experienced to do the work allocated to them. Around a third of respondents neither agreed nor disagree, likely pointing to a general lack of knowledge in this area. Seventeen percent of survey respondents strongly disagreed with this statement and ten percent disagree with the remainder (28%) agreeing.

Voluntourist's understanding of local context and societal norms is highlighted as an issue that needs to be considered by the industry and those who plan and manage it, as one respondent comments:

Volunteers have very little understanding of the issues they are trying to help with and their approaches can be more harmful than helpful – Sending Organisation

There is a varied response to questions asking if local communities currently have a say in what types of assistance they receive from voluntourism. Over one third agree (34%), and 12% strongly agree that they do, yet over 27% neither agree nor disagree and 22% disagree.

### **Regulation and Accreditation**

As the voluntourism market continues to expand, pleas for some sort of regulation are growing increasingly louder, as is media scrutiny of voluntourism activities. Prospective tourists, volunteer organisations and host communities, seek regulatory structures and features that will reduce negative experiences and maximise potential positive outcomes from voluntourism. There is currently little regulation of the voluntourism industry on an international scale. While there have been some attempts nationally, these have often had problems in their implementation. Conversely, voluntary based accreditation schemes and guidelines are on the rise (Appendix 2).

Both interviewees and survey respondents were asked about their thoughts on regulation and accreditation of the voluntourism industry. There is strong support of regulation, yet there is also a realisation that implementation and enforcement is difficult.

Survey respondents were asked if there were currently compliance requirements for voluntourism to operate in their APEC member economies. Nearly two thirds of respondents said yes (62%) and 38% said no. The most commonly noted types of compliance were business registration and/or having a travel agency licence. Others pointed to insurance safety standards requirements. The use of special visas was also mentioned, however it was noted that these restrictions are difficult to enforce.

My understanding is that volunteering is not allowed on a tourist visa - BUT people do it anyway – Private Business (Tourism)

Workshop discussions highlighted that the use of visas in an international context to regulate voluntourism faces challenges. In Nepal, it is illegal for travellers to volunteer on a tourist visa. Officially, voluntary work requires a work permit. However, there is a lot of bureaucracy involved and the criteria for gaining a work permit as a volunteer is unclear, and is not well enforced. Often only large organisations gain volunteer visas for their volunteers, and the majority of volunteers operate "illegally" on tourist visas. Nevertheless, tens of thousands of visitors volunteer in Nepal every year.

Special or higher fees for volunteer visas can be imposed for various reasons, including: discouraging volunteer activities and tourists; to garner additional funds from volunteer tourists; or as a feasible way to regulate the volunteer tourism market. In recent years, both Thailand and Tanzania have installed special volunteer visas, while other countries including Namibia are discussing the option.

The voluntourism industry is large in size and diverse in the range of activities offered, making any development of common quality assurance standards a difficult task (Jones, 2004). As one interviewee from a sending organisation commented:

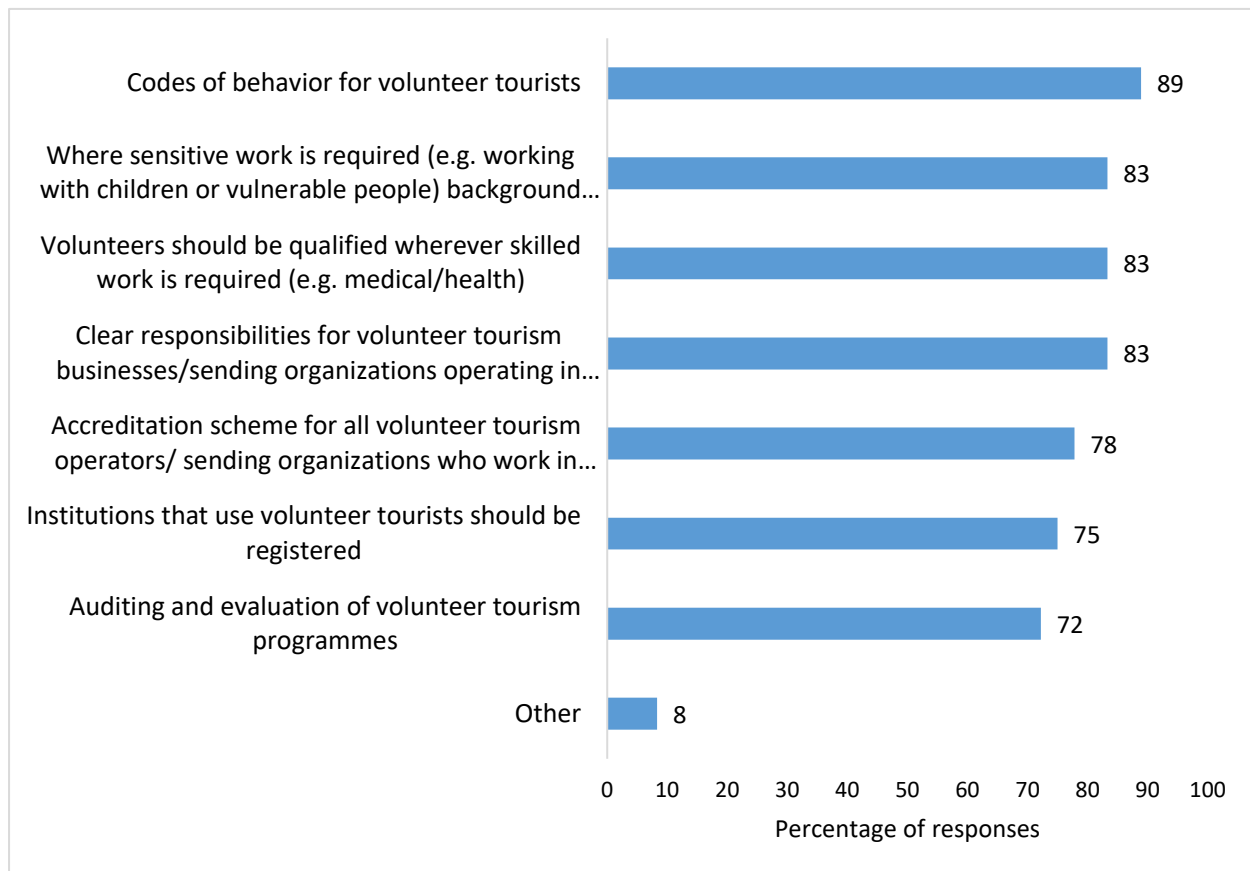
A wider challenge is the number of countries and governments involved. Is there a local development need towards a sustainable solution that voluntourism is solving? Or is it a tourism money making operation? If it is a money making operation it should be sold and taxed as such, and severe controls should be placed on orphanage, childcare, teaching and animal welfare activities. But if there is a local need, you don't want to place an economic burden. – Sending Organisation

There is strong support from those surveyed (69%) interviewed (72%) for regulation that strengthens the ability of communities to benefit from voluntourism. However there is concern expressed over the efficacy of past regulatory approaches, as one survey respondent noted:

Regulation is needed. I just hope you make history by getting it right. – Hosting Organisation

Survey participants were asked about what regulations they thought should be applied to voluntourism (Figure 14). Respondents were in support (70% or more) of all the offered forms of regulations. Codes of conduct for voluntourists rate the highest (89%). Background checks, qualified volunteers for skilled work, and clear responsibilities for sending organisations operating in the receiving economy all rating equally highly at 83%.

Figure 14: Regulation(s) needed to ensure local communities benefit from voluntourism (n=36)



Despite the general support for regulations, concerns are raised about who has the legitimacy to impose regulation on the voluntourism industry.

That worries me, who would regulate? Some of the problems are around how big powers are regulating the money – Sending Organisation

Accountability and transparency through a community-based system is suggested as a legitimate way to regulate the industry, this was preferred over externally imposed approaches. Despite practicalities and the question of ‘who would regulate’, it was stressed that community interests should be placed at the heart of any regulation scheme, ahead of commercial gain.

I think regulation that puts communities in the driver’s seat is vital. It makes sure that there’s people on the ground, that communities are leading, not participating, that they are driving the initiative. – Researcher

A community-orientated framework based on the 2008 Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria is one method proposed in the literature to put communities at the heart of things (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). For any form of framework to work it is vital to find the correct balance

between the needs of volunteers, the host community and the voluntourism organisation (Wearing and McGehee, 2013a).

A community-based approach if conducted well can potentially bring the following benefits:

- Input from a wide cross section of community
- Due consideration of issues raised by different community stakeholders
- Plan to meet a variety of needs from various community stakeholders
- The active commitment of the community and tourist
- Promotion of responsible use of community assets and resources.

Concerns are also raised by some research participants about the impact that regulation would have on organisations operating across various national boundaries. Several participants stressed that what is needed more than compliance regulation is industry standards that focus on balancing community interests and the needs of the volunteer.

The impact of regulation can be stressful it can make operation hard and a strain. There is also a big added cost and huge bureaucracy associated with it. What is needed is an industry standard that you can sign up to, which looks after the needs of communities and the volunteer – Sending Organisation

In order to be effective, blanket regulation of the industry needs to be enforceable, well resourced, and organisations need to be able to demonstrate they are in compliance. The problem and challenges around this that are raised tend again to reflect the diverse operational contexts and make-up of the voluntourism industry.

For some the key issues around regulating the voluntourism industry relate to a lot of “red-tape”, and issues arose about how useful such approaches would be at a practical level for communities.

I can't think of a regulation example that has worked well. When things work well its community and business working sustainability, it's not top down enforcement that works. – Researcher

Some noted that regulation would only led to corruption in certain contexts.

Officials would simply make it more complicated and with the level of corruption here it would cost more and achieve less – Host organisation

A running theme throughout the surveys and interviews was the pressing need to regulate high-risk voluntourism activities especially work with children in some form of residential care. Other high-risk activities where regulation can make a difference include medical, healthcare, teaching activities and animal welfare. This regulation may be achieved at a national level, and can dovetail with existing regulations with a focus on enforcement and scrutiny of the voluntourism industry.

In response to growing concern over high-risk voluntourism there have been both membership based regulations and mandatory national regulations placed on volunteer work with children at both international and national scales. In recent years, Cambodia is one of a few countries that has actively worked on volunteer tourism policies to impose 'Minimum Standards of Alternative Care' for child protection in orphanages, although it is struggling with implementation with few inspectors nationwide to enforce the regulations. Cambodia works closely with UNICEF on the reunification of children with their families (80% of children in orphanages have one or more living parent in Cambodia).

There have been efforts by charity organisations as well as tourism associations to mitigate the unintended negative impacts that have been seen to emerge from the voluntourism industry, with child welfare particularly in the spotlight. For example, 'The Code' seeks to protect children from trafficking and other forms of harm, and rejects membership of those organisations involved in tourism activities which include orphanages. There are also a number of charities, and associations which in recent years have developed 'guiding principles', codes of ethics, and guidelines for sending organisations, in response to concerns over the unregulated nature of the industry.

The main reason given by the stakeholders surveyed and interviewed for opposing regulation was the logistics of how it would work, both from a governance point of view and specifically for voluntourism organisations. This included power dynamics, both in governance (legitimacy) and for resources required for organisations that have to fill in the paperwork. It is important to strike a balance in creating regulations that can be implemented effectively and that do not place unnecessary burdens on smaller operations, but at the same time will target and mitigate specific targeted risks.

### **Accreditation**

There was strong support among research participants for accreditation schemes. Eighty-six percent of interviewees agreed that accreditation was required and only 19% disagreed. Participants felt that accreditation is more easily managed than regulation and can be implemented across the varying contexts of voluntourism and geographical reach of the APEC region. Accreditation is viewed as necessary to safeguard the reputation of the industry, and is seen as an agreeable 'half-way house' due to the complexities of implementing and enforcing regulation.

Regulation is quite complex and how do you do it? Whereas accreditation might be a realistic half way house. It is based on certain objectives and standards and expectations. You can at least manage it a little bit better – Sending Organisation

Accreditation is seen as a way to lay down accepted industry standards that can mitigate the challenges posed by "rogue operators" and also be of benefit the voluntourist. The latter becomes better equipped to recognise responsible voluntourism operators, and will ultimately have a better experience. Any form of accreditation needs to be designed well, and aim at changing practices so that communities are the first beneficiaries from voluntourism.

Several participants noted that accreditation has been tried and failed in other settings, and that the impact it makes is relatively negligible. Participants' stressed that focussing on shaping consumer demand for good practice voluntourism would be a more effective way to raise industry standards.

There's a right and wrong way to do it [accreditation]. My concern with those it enables those that are backed by more resources to get that but it doesn't tackle the real issues. If consumers are educated that's more important. Business will follow. – Sending Organisation

Another participant notes that both organisations and voluntourists have a role to play in learning about responsible voluntourism.

Organisations offering voluntourism need to become better at what they do, and travellers more discerning. - Sending Organisation

Voluntourism is a reciprocal agreement between two parties (voluntourist and the community) and Banki and Schonell (2017) posit that a 'contract norm' is needed to mitigate the challenges. This is not legally enforceable, rather it is a personal commitment on the part of the volunteers and the local partner. Creating a non-binding contract or pledge would allow voluntourists to reflect on their motives and help them to reflect on motivations. Such a pledge could also include some important caveats, for instance in the use of how local people and vulnerable people (children) are represented on social media etc. For example, a voluntourist pledge could be drawn up between the community and the sending organisation, and voluntourists could sign their name to it when booking through sending or servicing organisations. This allows host communities to note particular norms specific to the context. Adding light hearted and humorous yet informative videos about being a responsible voluntourist on specific projects is another tool to help educate voluntourists to be responsible in different settings.

Another way demand can be shaped is by placing a burden on third party mediators to take responsibility for promoting best practice and educating prospective voluntourists on how to select ethical voluntourism organisations. By doing this, organisations may also take more notice on how to lift standards to achieve best practice.

More burden needs to be placed on third party mediators. They don't educate volunteers or validate the organisations. – Sending Organisation

Accreditation schemes take resources to implement, not only in managing the scheme – processing and verifying applications - but also for operators who need to apply to join. The management of accreditation, in terms of on-going validation of operators also increases the cost of such schemes. Without regular spot checks on actual operations, it can become a "tick box" exercise suited to larger organisations with the capacity to undertake the process.

Businesses check the box, and then don't follow through. It [accreditation] doesn't fix the problem. – Voluntourism Sending Organisation



A reason that there is high cost of implementation is the resources needed to fill in lengthy forms, which can hinder business, especially for small grassroots operators. The diversity of the voluntourism industry was again raised as a hindrance in designing and setting up such a scheme. In addition, the need to oversee a scheme can make it costly, and the burden in other settings, such as ecotourism, has fallen on operators to pay to join an accreditation schemes.

All the large organisations will get it because they have PR staff, etc. and the little companies that do really well might miss out. – Servicing Organisation

Accreditation schemes should ideally be tailored at a local level to incorporate the different contexts of voluntourism, and linking to existing bodies can help to manage the process appropriately (Wearing and McGehee, 2013).

For an accreditation scheme to be effective, it needs to be well recognised. It also has to be meaningful, and make a difference in addressing and mitigating negative impacts.

If it's able to be widely known then [accreditation schemes] are effective. How many people know it exists? High profile international or international standard. A bit like Fairtrade logo. Gradually it could be built up. – Sending organisation

Interviewees were asked what the aim of an accreditation scheme should be, and the key elements it should set out to achieve. Two core ambitions were most commonly mentioned; 1) to create and aim for higher industry standards and, 2) to provide better information and awareness for volunteers. Other suggestions related to what voluntourism accreditation should aim for include:

- Continuous improvement for the industry
- Marketing and transparency for sending organisations
- The consideration of development principals in voluntourism
- Building relationships and partnerships between stakeholder
- A benchmark for best practice on a national scale
- Having evaluation mechanisms by volunteers and communities
- The improvement of safety standards.

Interviewee suggestions about what a voluntourism accreditation scheme should include comprise the following elements:

- Community interests, and fair portrayal of local communities
- Education of volunteers – information on how to choose an ethical company
- Clear aims, objectives and operating model of sending and hosting organisations
- A directory of best practice/accredited organisations
- Regular reviews and assistance to aid businesses to continuously improve their operations
- Widely agreed parameters relating to industry standards

- Risk management for volunteers and local communities, including transparency in 'who benefits'
- Alignment to international principles
- Local voice, support from community and/or country
- Identification of best practice via an evidence base
- Project aims and objectives, and how it proposes to help the community

Wearing and McGehee (2013) argue that accreditation for voluntourism is crucial while acknowledging that operationalisation is complex. The authors outline practical steps that could be taken to create a voluntourism accreditation process (Wearing and McGehee, 2013, 134).

- a needs assessment of the different stakeholders;
- a white paper analysing market demand for the accreditation of volunteer tourism and documenting the feasibility/need to establish an accreditation body;
- recommendations for accreditation criteria;
- a proposal for establishing and maintaining an accreditation volunteer tourism organisation that could be taken to an international organisation for further funding;
- a complete organisational blueprint and implementation plan;
- organisation of preliminary meetings with key players;
- establish a generic standard for volunteer tourism;

The governance of accreditation is challenging, including the question of what body will fit such a role. Several participants noted that government either at a national level, or a trusted regional or international body, would be a legitimate body to accredit voluntourism.

Wearing and McGehee, (2013) make recommendations on what a voluntourism certification body should be responsible for:

- support the definition of local standards for each country or region;
- establish accreditation criteria for tourism certifiers;
- accredit certifiers;
- guarantee stakeholders' participation;
- promote accreditation system and standards; and
- perform random audits of certifiers and companies.

Currently, no strict regulations have been put in place by governing bodies in relation to voluntourism projects and activities in the APEC region. One reason for a lack of policy and regulation could be the lack of consensus on a management agency and the costs of implementing such initiatives.

Filling this vacuum in government policies and regulations has been the steady rise in industry standards and frameworks, codes of conduct and certifications for volunteer tourism projects and organisations worldwide. The critical success factor of such initiatives is the buy-

in from both voluntourists and sending organisations. There has to be a critical mass involved from both groups to set recognisable industry standards that will influence decision-making processes and the strategy and practices of organisations. Appendix 2 provides a review of existing voluntourism frameworks around the world.

Despite the expanding list of accreditation schemes, codes and guidelines, none offer clear and enforceable regulations to measure the impact of volunteer tourism projects on local communities at the destination. What becomes clear from our review of existing voluntary schemes and codes of practice is that there is a strong desire to ensure the volunteer tourism industry regulates itself. Increasingly, volunteering organisations are demonstrating their commitment to making their projects beneficial to those involved and raising the standards for volunteers. However, with the rise of guidelines and schemes to ensure standards and best practice within the sector, there is a risk that this could lead to consumer confusion and scepticism and a lack of universal recognition of the schemes. The challenge now is whether the current ones will be embraced by organisations and if consumer decision-making will be influenced by them.

Any form of regulation or accreditation needs to be well planned, in conjunction with key stakeholders, and important considerations include ensuring smaller operators are not excluded due to higher costs. Regulation or accreditation also needs to be evidence based, targeted to mitigate risks, and have integrity. It is important to ensure adequate resourcing to implement, monitor and enforce any regulation or accreditation programs.

## 5. Policy Recommendations

The *APEC Tourist Arrivals and Inclusive Growth* (2016) report stresses the need for active governance and intervention for tourism to remain inclusive. It also advocates for policy at an international level while acknowledging the time and difficulty in coordinating this. Another strategy aimed at inclusive growth, is ensuring coordination and engagement between communities and tourism, and strengthening local linkages to minimise leakage from the tourism sector. This is something that voluntourism when well governed has the power to achieve.

The challenges and opportunities of voluntourism have increasingly gained the attention of policy-makers, NGOs and the public at large. This, in turn, has led to a focus on regulations, accreditation schemes and guidelines, policy debates and media coverage. While often progressive and based on good intentions, the implementation and enforcement of voluntourism regulations and policies has been limited. Although the voluntourism industry is growing in many parts of the world, the tourism sector itself has not always been a lead change agent. There is a lack of sharing and celebrating best practice examples of voluntourism around the world, including the lessons learnt around the planning and management of successful schemes. There is also very little tangible evidence on the impact voluntourism has on local communities, and thus little basis on which to formulate policy on an international, regional or national scale.

This final section of the report now outlines a series of recommendations for consideration, which are designed to guide APEC economies and stakeholders in policy formation to ensure communities could fully benefit from voluntourism. The reader is also referred to additional recommendations for various stakeholders provided in the related report: *Voluntourism Best Practices in the APEC Region: Guidebook*.

### **Share voluntourism best practices and information widely via networks**

- The APEC TWG can play a role in ensuring that best practice voluntourism information is shared widely throughout member economies and those officers working with local communities to develop or manage voluntourism.
- THE APEC TWG can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and formation of networks to spread information on best practice voluntourism.

### **OPTIONS TO EXPLORE MOVING FORWARD**

- Raise awareness of the *APEC Voluntourism Guidelines*, share widely and pilot their use in different settings.
- APEC member economies can support the formation of partnerships and implementation of the *APEC Voluntourism Guidelines*. This may include identifying best practice community operators and connecting them to others so that communities are able to learn from one another about how they plan for voluntourism in different contexts.

- APEC and its partners can use networks to disseminate the *APEC Volontourism Guidelines* widely. The Guidelines can be widely shared on responsible tourism blogs and through social networks. The APEC TWG can distribute the Guidebook and if required it can be translated into different APEC languages for further distribution to APEC Tourism Officers (those responsible for the governance of tourism in APEC member economies).
- Celebrate examples of best practice among APEC members, and facilitate site visits and knowledge transfer between best practice projects and those wishing to set up new operations in member economies.
- Convene a conference (real or virtual) to discuss how voluntourism can better align to local needs and priorities, and how collectively opportunities can be harnessed. Facilitate the involvement of stakeholders (organisations, policy-makers and community leaders) from receiving economies (Peru, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia) and sending economies (mainly New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Canada).
- Provide mechanisms to share information, establish one central place for voluntourism information and assist people to get access to it. This could be a simple online platform where research and existing guidelines are available for stakeholders to access.
- Convene a Workshop, or gathering of community leaders who are actively involved in voluntourism in the APEC region. This Workshop can tell the stories of voluntourism from a community perspective and act as a gauge of community perceptions towards voluntourism in the APEC region. It will also allow for different communities to share lessons learnt across different contexts. A pre-workshop survey of Workshop/conference participants could draw out the key issues and opportunities to be discussed directly relating to community issues.
- Collaborate with others on working with existing Guidelines and codes of practice in various contexts and for different stakeholders.

### **Empower communities to plan well for voluntourism**

Community are at the forefront of voluntourism, it is local people that can benefit and also be harmed by the industry. Our research supports those commentators who recommend that a community based approach be taken to voluntourism, with the community driving the project and taking ownership (Wearing and McGehee, 2013; Taplin et al., 2014). Policy should centre on community as the key stakeholders, which in turn will result in a better experience for the voluntourist.

- APEC TWG can provide communities with tools to plan holistically for voluntourism and assist with the coordination of voluntourism with local needs.
- APEC TWG can provide assistance for communities and sending organisations to align activities to identified local needs and priorities.

## OPTIONS TO EXPLORE MOVING FORWARD

- APEC tourism officers should be well informed and able to relay to communities the pros and cons of voluntourism and assist in providing planning tools, many of which are freely available (outlined in the Guidebook) and can be adapted to suit different contexts.
- Enable communities to better understand voluntourism, including the concept of volunteering and facilitate holistic planning.
- Provide guidance to support community-based/community-led programs and help them to link to reputable sending organisations. Organisations in the receiving country should be registered and show how they have engaged with the community/how the activity is meeting a required need. Verified consent from the community leaders that they have agreed to a voluntourism project and have a relationship with the sending organisation should be a minimum standard. Request a preliminary project plan for all new ventures. For existing ventures, community feedback should be sought.
- Advocate to communities and organisations to build into voluntourism activities an element of facilitated learning and cultural exchange as the primary activity with voluntourism activities as a secondary focus. For example learning about local projects and initiatives as a primary activity and helping on a task as a secondary focus.
- Use the *APEC Voluntourism Guidebook* to plan for voluntourism in different contexts. Provide communities with the Guidelines (and translate appropriately) and provide support mechanisms for communities to adapt to their needs in the planning and evaluation of voluntourism.
- Employ tourism governance agencies to provide information to voluntourists on cultural sensitivities as well as information on responsible voluntourism.
- Encourage the formation of trusting partnerships between communities and organisations.
- Collectively identify where voluntourism can link into existing community priorities, what key issues or problems could be solved, or what local projects and initiative's need support. This can be done by via a community needs assessment being completed by the community with cross-sector support.
- Identify where voluntourism can link with local, national, and international priorities and create an accessible database of corresponding projects and initiatives. This includes planning how voluntourism can help to securer outputs that will lead to the achievement of longer term outcomes. Evaluation of particular activities could be measured against relevant UN SDGs to evaluate development impact. For instance, SDG 1. No poverty, SDG 4. Quality education, SDG 5. Gender equality, SDG 6. Clean water and sanitation, SDG 7. Affordable and clean energy, SDG 9. Decent work and economic growth, SDG 12. Climate action, SDG 16. Peace justice and strong institutions.
- Create an online platform for responsible voluntourism opportunities – a list of reputable projects across the APEC region so that voluntourists can chose reputable schemes.
- Ensure that local people who will work alongside the voluntourists have been consulted in the planning. For example, in all cases of teaching activities, the local teacher should plan

exactly how the voluntourist will add value and will not disrupt the classroom or the national circular.

- Encourage greater linkages with the local economy – throughout the supply chain, for instance linking to local food and handicrafts, and using sustainable tourism operators and accommodation providers who are based locally.

### **Regulate high risk voluntourism activities**

Some voluntourism activities are higher risk than others. There is an urgent need for the regulation of high-risk voluntourism activities across the APEC region at a regional or national level. In particular volunteer work with children in orphanages/residential care should be an urgent focus for policy-makers in the APEC region.

### **OPTIONS TO EXPLORE MOVING FORWARD**

- Strictly monitor and regulate volunteer work with children. Work with international independent organisations who focus on child protection in tourism: The Code, Better Care Network, ChildSafe, and UNICEF are all reputable international bodies who can provide advice and strategies for transition from residential care to family based support.
- Do not encourage volunteer work in orphanages and do not develop this activity. If the activity is prevalent in your APEC member economy, then work with charities to transition to family based care where it is safe and possible to do so and ensure there is adequate assessment and ongoing support structures are in place for safeguarding of those children.
- Ensure child welfare policies exist and are actively implemented for all voluntourism activities that involve working with children. Enforce mandatory background and criminal checks for voluntourists who work with children.
- Work with voluntourism sending and host organisations and encourage partnership with pragmatic and industry focussed independent organisations such as The Code to ensure children are protected within voluntourism activities.
- Closely monitor medical and healthcare activities including keeping a register for all organisations and all related activities happening at a national level – enforce reporting requirements around community needs, and informed consent for children and adults. Ensure that there is an appropriate level of skill for the work being undertaken. Enforce this, and undertake spot checks on organisations who are undertaking medical and healthcare activities. Where healthcare crosses cultural sensitivities, provide information and advice to sending organisations to be aware of.
- Closely monitor animal welfare activities, and encourage reporting requirements of supply chain management around animals, including breeding policies. For instance, those that can supply the information can advertise this on their websites as being endorsed by a reputable body. This is to ensure that animal sanctuaries are not breeding animals for canned hunting purposes. Encourage organisations working in this field to partner with

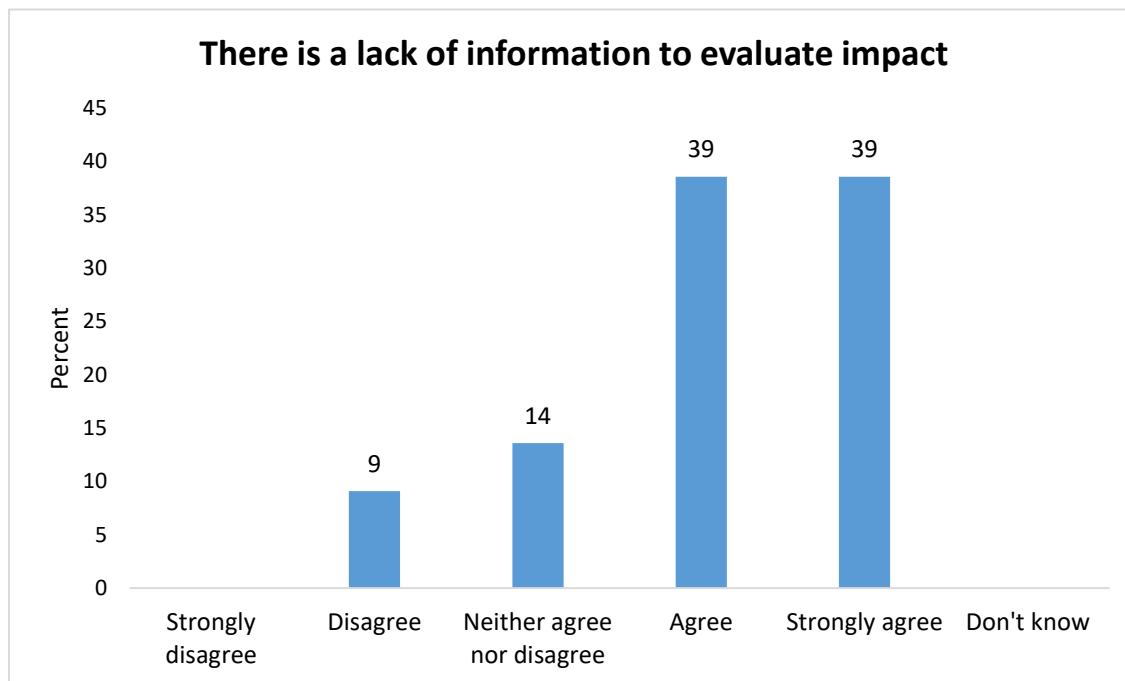
animal welfare organisations. Provide advice to sending and hosting organisations to work within frameworks for international standards for animal welfare (see Guidelines).

### Monitor and evaluate voluntourism

There is strong agreement identified in this report and the related literature that voluntourism must be monitored in order to evaluate the impact it has on local communities and broader economies (Taplin et al., 2014; Lupoli et al., 2014; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). It is only then that evidence-based policy can be formulated that addresses the key issues relating to voluntourism in each APEC member economy or across the wider region.

Over three quarters (78%) of respondents to our research commented that there was insufficient information about voluntourism in the APEC region to enable effective evaluation of the impact that voluntourism has on local communities (Figure 15).

Figure 15: There is a lack of information to evaluate the impact of voluntourism on local communities (n=44)



The APEC TWG can facilitate objective evaluation which could support evidence based strategy to enable communities and other stakeholders to fully benefit from voluntourism.

This report provides baseline data on voluntourism in the APEC region which future research can be built upon. In particular there is a need to gain wide-ranging community perspectives on voluntourism impacts and this will require a longer data collection period.



## OPTIONS TO EXPLORE MOVING FORWARD

Several methods have focused on how the voluntourism industry can be evaluated. Many studies have worked with sending organisations, however all agree that evaluation methods should be designed in consultation with the local community.

- 1) **Qualitative approach:** Taplin et al. (2014) recommend a critical qualitative approach for voluntourism sending organisations to evaluate their impact. This is to account for the variety of contexts that voluntourism compasses.
- 2) **Indicator approach:** Lupoli, et al. (2014) while acknowledging the challenges of different contexts, recommend indicator measures that focus on four cross cutting issues: nature, economy, society and well-being. Some examples of indicators include 'economic opportunities for women/disadvantaged groups' and 'tourism expenditures that stay within the community'. Tourism expenditure staying within the local community is vital to evaluate. Of the proposed environmental indicators, organisations rated 'local community attitudes towards the environment' as the most useful indicator. The most useful community indicators are 'engagement of the community in community improvement projects'. In regards to the 'wellness' indicators, the two most advantageous were 'educational programs for school children' and 'satisfaction of community members with the volunteer tourism program'.
- 3) **Voluntourism project evaluation:** Wearing and McGehee (2013) propose that impacts be evaluated on a project by project basis. Their 'Volunteer Tourism Project Framework' gains the perceptions of both the community and the voluntourist experience and evaluates the project based on achievements against original planned objectives.

It is essential to keep track of what is happening across the APEC region in terms of voluntourism and to evaluate the impact it is having on local communities. In order to do this, the following methods can be considered:

- Keep track of what sort of voluntourism operations (for example how many, where, what type, and what are they doing) are operating in the member economy. Have voluntourism organisations participate in a country register.
- Identify what the main issues in voluntourism are at a national scale and review who is responsible at the member economy level.
- Have policy makers familiarise themselves and engage with the top sending and servicing agencies in the APEC region (Appendix 3).
- APEC Member economies should ensure all organisations are familiar with national regulations and comply with them, and monitor regularly to ensure that this is the case.
- APEC member economies should capture community perceptions of voluntourism on a case by case basis, including the facilitation of objective research on the impacts of voluntourism on local life. This information gap must be addressed before moving forward with any meaningful regulation of the industry to ensure community benefits.

- Facilitate focus groups with community leaders involved in voluntourism across APEC member economies to capture feedback and create impactful regulations or accreditations.
- Put in place community evaluation mechanisms that have general criteria to compare at a national level but have qualitative components to account for context at a local level.
- Evaluate impacts in different settings and exchange findings with other APEC member economies.
- Invest resources to understand what the key issues are at local, sub-regional, and national levels by gathering community and volunteer feedback.
- Discuss and decide on a framework for broad based evaluation of voluntourism that can be rolled out across the APEC region. Pilot first, adapt, and then seek feedback from all stakeholders in the development of the framework.

### **Be active in shaping demand**

The APEC TWG works with its members and associated stakeholders to spread information about being a responsible voluntourist.

### **OPTIONS TO EXPLORE MOVING FORWARD**

- The majority of voluntourists are studying (70% are students and over 90% study full time). Therefore, schools, universities and tertiary institutions are key partners in spreading the word about being a responsible voluntourist. Where voluntourism is actively promoted via universities or schools, information should also be advertised to prospective volunteers about how to be a responsible voluntourist.
- Connect to large voluntourism organisations (the top 21 that send to APEC are in Appendix 3) and ask them to share information about responsible voluntourism. Ensure these organisations in particular know about national regulations, cultural sensitivities and work with them to share information about impacts.
- Put pressure on all servicing organisations (see the large ones that operate across the APEC region in Appendix 3) to advertise how to be a responsible voluntourist and how to identify best practice operators.

# Bibliography

Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA). (2016). *Volunteer Tourism Guidelines*.

Adventure Travel Trade Association. (2016). *Adventure Tourism Development Index*. Retrieved from: <https://www.adventuretravel.biz/research/2016-adventure-tourism-development-index/>

Adventure Travel Trade Association & George Washington University. (2013). *Adventure tourism market study 2013*. Retrieved from: <http://files.adventuretravel.biz/docs/research/adventure-tourism-market-study-2013-web.pdf>

Andereck, K., McGehee, N. G., Lee, S., & Clemmons, D. (2012). Experience expectations of prospective volunteer tourists. *Journal of Travel Research*, 51(2), 130-141.

Andres, E, A, S., Cheok, D., and Othman, L. (2016). *Tourist Arrivals and Inclusive Growth* (Report No.11). Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat: APEC Policy Support Unit.

APEC. (2013). Global Cooperation to Strengthen the Harmonization of Regional Statistics on Trade and Tourism. Retrieved from [https://www.apec.org/~media/Files/Groups/GOS/20131031\\_TradeTourismStatsPressRel\\_GOS.pdf](https://www.apec.org/~media/Files/Groups/GOS/20131031_TradeTourismStatsPressRel_GOS.pdf)

Ashley, C., Ashley, C., Goodwin, H., & Roe, D. (2001). *Pro-poor tourism strategies: Expanding opportunities for the poor*. London: ODI.

Barker, M. (2014, September 10). *Can we mend, not end, voluntourism?* Retrieved from: <http://outbounding.org/discussion/view/can-we-mend-not-end-voluntourism>

Barbieri, C., Santos, C. A., & Katsube, Y. (2012). Volunteer tourism: On-the-ground observations from Rwanda. *Tourism management*, 33(3), 509-516.

Banki, S., & Schonell, R. (2017). Voluntourism and the contract corrective. *Third World Quarterly*, 1-16

Benson, A. M., & Henderson, S. (2011). A strategic analysis of volunteer tourism organisations. *The Service Industries Journal*, 31(3), 405-424.

Brown, S. (2005). Travelling with a purpose: Understanding the motives and benefits of volunteer vacationers. *Current issues in tourism*, 8(6), 479-496.

Brown, S., & Morrison, A. M. (2003). Expanding volunteer vacation participation an exploratory study on the mini-mission concept. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 28(3), 73-82.

Callanan, M., & Thomas, S. (2005). Volunteer tourism. *Niche tourism*, 183-200.

Chen, L. J., & Chen, J. S. (2011). The motivations and expectations of international volunteer tourists: A case study of "Chinese Village Traditions". *Tourism Management*, 32(2), 435-442.

Clemmons, D. (n.d.). *History Of VolunTourism*. Retrieved November 27, 2017, from: <https://volunteertourismviews.wordpress.com/2013/03/10/some-history-on-volunteer-tourism/#10>

Coghlan, A., & Noakes, S. (2012). Towards an understanding of the drivers of commercialization in the volunteer tourism sector. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 37(2), 123-131.

- Connors, T. D. (2010). Strategic professional development ahead for volunteer resource managers. Improving quality of life through contributions to sustained organisational effectiveness. *International Journal of Volunteer Administration*, 27(1), 37-42.
- Connors, T. D. (2011). *The Volunteer Management Handbook: Leadership Strategies for Success*. CAB Publishing: Boston.
- Conran, M. (2011). They really love me: Intimacy in volunteer tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), 1454-1473.
- Ellis, C. (2003). When volunteers pay to take a trip with scientists—Participatory Environmental Research Tourism (PERT). *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 8(1), 75-80.
- ECPAT Germany. (2015). *From volunteering to voluntourism. Challenges for the responsible development of a growing travel trend* (Policy Paper No.18). Berlin: Bread for the World - Protestant Development Service.
- Fair Trade Tourism. (2016). *Report on The mark of best practise*. Retrieved from <http://www.fairtrade.travel/source/websites/fairtrade/documents/Aug-2016.pdf>
- Germann Molz, J. (2017). Giving back, doing good, feeling global: The affective flows of family voluntourism. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 46(3), 334-360.
- Gray, N. J., & Campbell, L. M. (2007). A decommodified experience? Exploring aesthetic, economic and ethical values for volunteer ecotourism in Costa Rica. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15(5), 463-482.
- Go Overseas. (2014). *2014 Official Volunteer Abroad Trends Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.gooverseas.com/industry-trends/annual-volunteer-abroad-report>
- Green Traveller Guide (2010, August, 10). *Voluntourism: How to combine luxury and labour*. Retrieved from: <http://greentravelerguides.com/luxury-voluntourism/>
- Hall, C. M. (Ed.). (2007). *Pro-poor tourism: who benefits? Perspectives on tourism and poverty reduction* (Vol. 3). Channel View Publications.
- Hartman, E. (2015). 16 Fair Trade Learning. *International service learning: Engaging host communities*, 17, 215.
- International Institute of Tourism Studies & Adventure Travel Trade Association. (2016). *Adventure Tourism Development Index*. Retrieved from <https://tia.org.nz/assets/Uploads/2016-adventure-tourism-development-index.pdf>
- The International Ecotourism Society. (2012). *International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators*. Retrieved from: <http://www.icrtourism.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/TIES-Voluntourism-Guidelines.pdf>
- Jones, A. (2004). *Review of Gap Year Provision* (Briefing No:RB555). Retrieved from: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130104001007/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RB555.pdf>
- Kontogeorgopoulos, N. (2014). The relationship between volunteer tourism and development in Thailand. *Turizam: znanstveno-stručni časopis*, 62(3), 239-255.

- Lupoli, C. A., Morse, W. C., Bailey, C., & Schelhas, J. (2014). Assessing the impacts of international volunteer tourism in host communities: a new approach to organizing and prioritizing indicators. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22(6), 898-921.
- Low, R. (2017). Traveling Overseas to Help? Whom are You Helping?. In *Good Intentions Are Not Enough: Why We Fail at Helping Others* (pp. 16-19).
- Marriott, E. (1999). Charity now begins abroad. *Evening Standard*, March 5, 49.
- McAllum, K., & Zahra, A. (2017). The positive impact of othering in voluntourism: The role of the relational other in becoming another self. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 1-18.
- McGehee, N. G. (2014). Volunteer tourism: evolution, issues and futures. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22(6), 847-854.
- McGehee, N. G., & Andereck, K. (2008). 'Pettin'the critters': exploring the complex relationship between volunteers and the voluntoured in McDowell County, West Virginia, USA, and Tijuana, Mexico. *Journeys of discovery in volunteer tourism: International case study perspectives*, 12-24.
- McGehee, N. G., & Andereck, K. (2009). Volunteer tourism and the "voluntoured": the case of Tijuana, Mexico. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(1), 39-51.
- McGehee, N. G., & Santos, C. A. (2005). Social change, discourse and volunteer tourism. *Annals of tourism research*, 32(3), 760-779.
- McLennan, S. (2014). Medical voluntourism in Honduras: 'Helping' the poor?. *Progress in Development Studies*, 14(2), 163-179.
- McMillion, B., Cutchins, D., & Geissinger, A. (2006). *Volunteer vacations (9th ed.)*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press.
- Mostafanezhad, M. (2013). The geography of compassion in volunteer tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 15(2), 318-337.
- Mostafanezhad, M. (2014). Locating the tourist in volunteer tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 17(4), 381-384.
- Novelli, M. (Ed.). (2005). *Niche tourism: contemporary issues, trends and cases*. Routledge.
- Novelli, M., Morgan, N., Mitchell, G., & Ivanov., K. (2016). Travel philanthropy and sustainable development: the case of the Plymouth–Banjul Challenge, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 24(6), 824-845.
- New Zealand Tourism Research Institute. (2016). *Vanuatu Pre-Post Cyclone Volunteer Tourists*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Popham, G. (2015, June 29). *Boom in 'voluntourism' sparks concerns over whether the industry is doing good*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-travel-volunteers-charities/boom-in-voluntourism-sparks-concerns-over-whether-the-industry-is-doing-good-idUSKCN0P91AX20150629>

- Raymond, E. (2008). 'Make a difference!': the Role of Sending Organisations in Volunteer Tourism. In Lyons, K. & Wearing, S. *Journeys of discovery in volunteer tourism: International case study perspectives*, 48-60.
- Raymond, E., Hall, M. (2008). The development of cross-cultural (mis)understanding through volunteer tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 16,530-543.
- Salter, R. (2012). *Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Business Growth Opportunities in the New APEC Economy*. Retrieved from: <http://www20.iadb.org/intal/catalogo/PE/2013/11191.pdf>
- Salvesen, A. (2014, October 14). *Official Volunteer Abroad Trends Report*. Retrieved from <http://aut.ac.nz.libguides.com/APA6th/reports>
- Sherraden, M. S., Stringham, J., Sow, S. C., & McBride, A. M. (2006). The Forms and Structure of International Voluntary Service. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations*, 17(2), 156-173.
- Sherraden, M. S., Lough, B., & McBride, A. M. (2008). Effects of international volunteering and service: Individual and institutional predictors. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations*, 19(4), 395.
- Sin, H. L. (2009). Volunteer tourism—"involve me and I will learn". *Annals of tourism research*, 36(3), 480-501.
- Singh, S., & Singh, T.V. (2004). Volunteer tourism: New pilgrimages to the Himalayas. In T.V. Singh (Ed.), *New horizons in tourism: Strange experiences and strangers practices* (pp. 181–194). Cambridge, MA: CABI
- Singh, T. V. (2002). Altruistic tourism: another shade of sustainable tourism. The case of Kanda community. *Tourism (Zagreb)*, 50(4), 361-370.
- Skoog, R. (2010, May 23). Interview with Ryan Skoog of Fly for Good [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/megan-schiebe/2010/05/22/interview-with-ryan-skoog-of-fly-for-good>
- Söderman, N., & Snead, S. L. (2008). Opening the gap: The motivation of gap year travellers to volunteer in Latin America. *Journeys of discovery in volunteer tourism: International case study perspectives*, 118-129.
- South Pacific Tourism Organisation. (2013). *Niche market profiles for the South Pacific*: Acorn tourism consulting ltd.
- Taplin, J., Dredge, D., & Scherrer, P. (2014). Monitoring and evaluating volunteer tourism: A review and analytical framework. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22(6), 874-897.
- The Code. (2016). *Voluntourism Policy*. Retrieved from: [http://www.thecode.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Voluntourism\\_booklet\\_1.pdf](http://www.thecode.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Voluntourism_booklet_1.pdf)
- The George Washington University School of Business. (2010). *Report on Adventure Tourism Market*. Retrieved from <https://cdn.adventuretravelnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Adventure-Travel-Market-2010FINALAug26.pdf>
- Tourism Research and Marketing. (2008). *Report on Volunteer Tourism: A Global Analysis: Atlas*.

United Nations World Tourism Organisation. (2016). *Asia Tourism Trends*.

Wearing, S. (2002). Re-centring the self in volunteer tourism. In Dann, G. M. (Eds.), *The tourist as a metaphor of the social world*, 237-262. Wallingford: CABI.

Wearing, S. (2004). Examining best practice in volunteer tourism. *Volunteering as leisure/leisure as volunteering an international assessment*, 209-224.

Wearing, S. L., Benson, A. M., & McGehee, N. (2016). Volunteer Tourism and Travel Volunteering. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Volunteering, Civic Participation, and Nonprofit Associations* (pp. 275-289). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Wearing, S., & McGehee, N. G. (2013). Volunteer tourism: A review. *Tourism Management*, 38, 120-130.

Wearing, S., & McGehee, N. G. (2013a). *International volunteer tourism: Integrating travellers and communities*. Boston: CAB International.

World Tourism Organisation. (2016). *Annual report*. Retrieved from [http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/annual\\_report\\_2016\\_web\\_0.pdf](http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/annual_report_2016_web_0.pdf)

World Travel and Tourism Council. (2016). *Travel and Tourism Economic Impact*. Retrieved from <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2017/world2017.pdf>

World Travel and Tourism Council. (2017). *Travel and Tourism Economic Impact*. Retrieved from <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/regions-2017/world2017.pdf>

WYSE Travel Confederation. (2007). *Global data, statistics and trend 11: industry review No.5 executive summary*. Student marketing Ltd.

Zahra, A. (2011). Volunteer tourism as a life-changing experience. *Volunteer tourism: Theoretical frameworks and practical application*, 90-101.

Zahra, A., & McGehee, N. G. (2013). Volunteer tourism: A host community capital perspective. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 42, 22-45.

# **APPENDICES**



## APPENDIX 1: Overview of assessment schemes, guidelines and codes

Organisation	Description	Approach	Main Focus
The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations	The Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages (2006)	Assessment application	Guide principles for a responsible marketing and communication in NGO's. Organisations will avoid stereotypical or sensational images in their public communications.
The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations	Irish Development NGOs: Code of Corporate Governance (2008)	Assessment application	Guide principles for administrative and intern quality process in NGO's.
The Code	The Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct (2016)	Policy	Mandatory policy for travel and tour companies who are members to prevent child sex tourism and trafficking of children.
Amizade Global Service-Learning	Fair Trade Learning (2011)	Accreditation scheme	Volunteer sending organisation commits to transparency, community-driven service, sustainability, and intercultural contact.
Responsible Tourism Partnership	Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism (2002)	Assessment application	Guide principles for economic responsibility, social responsibility and environmental responsibility.
PEPY Tours	Voluntourism Operator Self Check Guide (2014)	Self- assessment	A self-check guide for operators who want to provide volunteer experiences. The guide is focused in the relation between the partner organisation and the host community.
UNWTO	Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (1999)	Self- assessment	The aim is to help maximise the sector's benefits while minimising its potentially negative impact on the environment, cultural heritage and societies.
UNWTO	Ethics Award 2018: Guideline	Assessment application	Private Sector Commitment to the Global Code of Ethics and have reported on its implementation.

World Responsible Tourism Program	WTM Responsible Tourism Awards	Assessment application	Focused in tourism's contribution to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
Fair Trade Tourism South Africa	Membership program for tourism businesses	Certification program	Best-practice in responsible tourism in different focus areas: fair wages and working conditions, fair purchasing and operations, equitable distribution of benefits and respect for human rights, culture and the environment. The organisation also certificate volunteer programs.
The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)	International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators (2012)	Self-assessment	Designed to facilitate the sustainable development of voluntourism programs.
Comhlámh	Code of Good Practice (CoGP) for Volunteer Sending Agencies (2013)	Self-assessment	The focus is to ensure overseas volunteering has a positive impact for the three main stakeholders: the volunteer, the sending agency, and the local project and community. Additionally, it reflects a number of core values. These are: partnership, quality, security, encouraging appropriate volunteer attitudes, valuing volunteering, sustainability, development education, solidarity and the importance of contributing to development.
Comhlámh	Volunteer Chapter (2014)	Self-assessment	Guide for responsible volunteers overseas. Consider volunteer motivations, familiarised with the volunteer role, respect local culture, adapt to the place, work professionally.
ABTA	Volunteer Tourism Guidelines (2016)	Self-assessment	The aim is focused in the improvement and achievement of volunteer tourism standards for the organisations who provide volunteering experiences.
Responsible Tourism Tanzania (RTT)	Responsible Tourism Tanzania Certification (2011)	Certification program	The certification has the goal to encourage tourism sectors to take and improve sustainable and responsible initiatives.

ChildSafe Movement	ChildSafe Movement (2005)	Self assessment	ChildSafe Movement provides standards and tools to protect children and make youth safe. Through different awareness campaigns, 24/7 emergency support lines and trainings, ChildSafe involves different stakeholders and groups of interest.
Rainforest Alliance	Rainforest Alliance Certification (1986)	Certification program	The Rainforest Alliance works with farm and forest communities across Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, Myanmar, and China. They provide training and certification in different area, such as Forest, Wildlife, Climate, Communities, Food and farming, Humans rights.
GreenGlobe	GreenGlobe Accreditation (2002)	Certification program	GreenGlobe accreditation provides assessment to a wide range of tourism sectors in sustainability. The certification has four key themes: Sustainable Management; Social/Economic; Cultural Heritage; Environment.
Ecotourism Australia (EA)	Ecotourism Australia Certification (2003)	Certification program	The organisation has the aim to encourage and engaged organisation in sustainable environmental initiatives and responsible cultural initiatives.
Tourism Concern	Ethical Tour Operators Group (2010)	Assessment application	Ethical Tour Operators Group has the aim to encourage Tour Operators to promote and offer a fairer way to travel.
Accountable Now	Global Standard for CSO Accountability (2015)	Assessment application	The standards are oriented to Civil Society Organisations. The purpose is that CSO can take initiatives in different aspects related to social responsibility and improve of organisation such as justice and equally, women's right and gender equally, environmental protection, empower and others.
Safer Edge	Feasibility assessment	Self- assessment	Safer Edge provides training and tools for humanitarian

	Risk assessment Travel Briefing		organisations, development NGOs, universities conducting research, journalist and human right activists. The organisation offers different courses such as personal security, international travel security, security/ crisis management.
BSI Group (UK's National Standards Body)	A Guide to the British Standard for adventurous activities outside the United Kingdom (BS8848:2014)	Assessment application	BS8848:2014 provides standards and good practices for organisations that offers adventurous activities. The Guide overspread different aspects of the venture, such as planning, transport, staff and accommodation, activities.
Bread for the World, Working Group Tourism and Development (akte), ECPAT Germany	From Volunteering to Voluntourism. Challenges for the Responsible Development of a Growing Travel (2015)	Policy Paper	This publication describes important criteria develop an effective and responsible volunteering. It is a tool for tour operators, which provides voluntourism experiences.
VO-FAIR	VO-Fair certification (2013)	Certification Program	Through the certification process, VO-FAIR promotes criteria for a responsible volunteering.
Fair Trade Volunteering	Fair Trade Volunteering Criteria (2009)	Assessment application	The organisation promotes criteria for organisations to generate a positive impact for the project and volunteer. The criteria has been developed with volunteering organisations and local project partners.
Quifd	Quifd certificate (n.d)	Certification Program	Quifd certification provides standards for volunteers, public authorities, volunteering organisations. The aim is to encourage a quality, development and improve the volunteering projects.
Moving Worlds	Experteering planning guide (2011)	Assessment application	The aim of this planning guide is to facilitate the planning process between the Experteer and the Host organisation. The organisation Moving World's has free templates which organisations can use.

European Voluntary Service (EVS)	EVS accreditation (2014)	Accreditation scheme	EVS accreditation is a quality assessment for organisations, which want take part in EVS. This process is for organisations that want to receive and send volunteers or to act as coordinating organisations. These organisations need to accredit and assess different aspects.
Ethical Volunteering (Supported by Comhlámh, Tourism Concern, Mondo Challenge, Quest overseas)	The Ethical Volunteering Guide (2011)	Guideline	The guideline is oriented to volunteers and gives some recommendations and advice to pick an ethical volunteer program.
International Volunteers Program Association (IVPA)	Principles and Practices IVPA (2015)	Guideline	These Principles and Practices have the aim to ensure program quality, appropriate volunteer behaviour and key elements for volunteers to choose and ethical and fair volunteering.
Australian Government	Smart Volunteering (2018)	Self-assessment	This short brochure gives advice to travellers on how to be an informed volunteer, how to be prepared for volunteering and how to be child safe. It includes a self assessment checklist for volunteers.
UNWTO	Tips for a Responsible Traveller	Guidelines	It is a campaign promoted by UNWTO in the International Year on Sustainable Tourism for the Development (2017). The aim is to raise awareness about the contribution of tourism towards development and encourage stakeholders to engage and make a positive impact.
Year Out Group (YOG)	Questions to Organisations and Member's Charter Information	Guidelines	YOG is a membership organisation, which provides guidelines for voluntourist and member organisations. In addition has the aim to develop and promote a quality framework for projects and organisations.

Council for Learning Outside the Classroom	Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge	Accreditation scheme	The Quality Badge recognises providers, which offer good quality learning outside the classroom and manage the risk effectively.
--	--	----------------------	--

## **APPENDIX 2: Top sending / servicing organisations APEC region**

<b>Name of the organisation</b>	<b>Type of Organisation</b>	<b>Total of APEC economies where the organisation sends volunteers</b>
Go Abroad	Private	19
AISEEC	Non profit	19
Go Overseas	Private	18
One World	Private	17
Working Abroad	Non profit	16
Year Out Group	Non profit	16
Frontier	NGO	15
Help Go Abroad	Private	15
Travellers Quest	Private	14
Go Voluntouring	Private	14
Responsible Travel	Private	13
Volunteer World	Private	12
Go Eco	Private	10

### APPENDIX3: Top voluntourism activities by APEC member economy

APEC Economies	Types of Volunteer Programs						
	Building community facilities	Teaching activities	Skills development and training	Medical / health care	Animal welfare activities	Volunteer work in orphanage	Environmental/conservation activities
Australia	11	4	8	8	21	0	20
Brunei Darussalam	2	3	0	1	1	0	1
Canada	4	2	1	0	5	0	7
Chile	5	13	2	4	1	8	1
China	11	35	6	7	19	9	2
Hong Kong, China	5	8	8	1	4	0	4
Indonesia	11	15	9	10	20	4	7
Japan	12	10	6	6	2	2	6
Korea	6	11	6	4	1	1	2
Malaysia	13	12	4	3	19	1	11
Mexico	11	15	8	8	10	9	9
New Zealand	3	7	5	0	7	0	17
Papua New Guinea	7	4	5	5	3	0	2
Peru	23	29	15	23	13	18	20
Philippines	15	14	12	13	5	8	13
Russia	5	13	9	6	3	5	7
Singapore	4	7	8	5	11	0	5
Chinese Taipei	6	8	5	1	1	1	1
Thailand	26	55	39	20	46	25	19
United States	8	5	8	1	11	0	2
Viet Nam	17	35	16	20	9	21	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>165</b>