

Following the P.A.T.H.

measuring change in volunteers' knowledge, skills
and attitudes towards cultural and natural heritage,
and life

Published in November 2018 by the
Coordinating Committee for International
Voluntary Service (CCIVS) - UNESCO House
1 Rue Miollis, 75015, Paris, France

This project has been funded with support
from the European Commission.

This publication reflects the views only of the
author, and the European Commission cannot
be held responsible for any use which may
be made of the information contained therein.



CCIVS
70 YEARS
Coordinating Committee for
International Voluntary Service
1948-2018

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





I.

PLANNING FOR IMPACT - A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

One of the most popular definitions of impact assessment, given by Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman in *Evaluation: A Systemic Approach* (2004), reminds us that at the beginning of any research should reside the essential step of clarifying the goals and objectives of the program assessed - that is, in order to evaluate the impact of the projects, we first need to clarify its explicit program logic: *"Impact assessments are undertaken to find out whether programs actually produce the intended effects. A program effect, or impact, refers to a change in the target population or social conditions that has been brought about by the program, that is, a change that would not have occurred had the program been absent, [...] establishing that the program is a cause of some specified effect."*

The PATH project answered very successfully this initial, often forgotten challenge by investing an important amount of time and resources in building, in particular during the **Stakeholders Forum** in Paris, a deep understanding and consensus around the specific objectives that the project, and in particular the camps implemented by each partner, wanted to achieve. In an effort to promote **participative research** the representatives of the **27 partner organisations** were involved in drafting the very questions that were later submitted to the volunteers before and after the local projects took place.

Starting from the **identification of broad categories** of expected impact, stakeholders successively worked on **prioritising the most important areas** for which they wanted to assess the effect of their projects - the **thematic constructs** that are treated in the analysis of outcomes - and finally **drafting for each of them a series of questions** that in their understanding constituted the best way to address the changes they wanted to stimulate in the volunteers through their participation in the PATH camps.

The central importance attributed in international voluntary service projects to **the Value of Work as a catalyst of change** was confirmed during the statistical analysis, which showed **strong positive correlations*** between the meaningfulness attributed by the participants to the practical work and outcomes of their projects, and their perceived change in the specific culture- and heritage-related domains assessed by the pre-post tests.

Table 1. Macro-categories: priority areas of expected impact for the PATH camps as discussed by the stakeholders

Identity	Interculturality	Heritage knowledge
Cultural Understanding	Value of Work	Preservation
Respect for Diversity	Solidarity	Sustainability



II.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

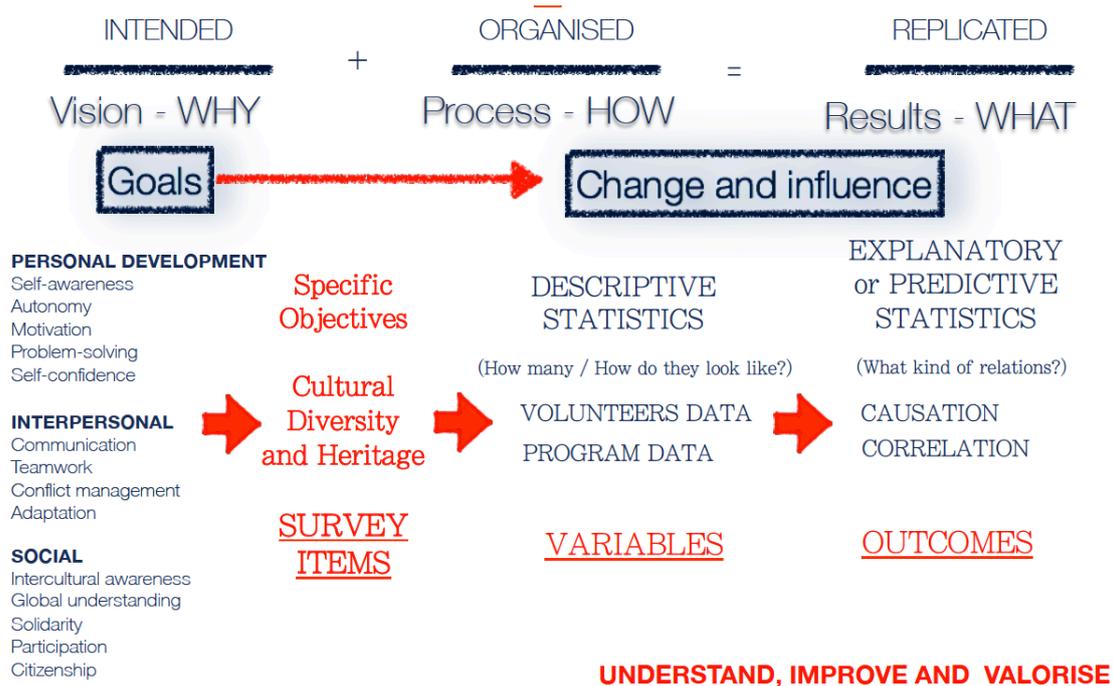
The **culture- and heritage-related categories** and questions indicated by the stakeholders as common priorities were then **tested for validity** and constituted the core of the questionnaires distributed to the volunteers: the surveys also included **additional standard measures** widely utilised by CCIVS and its partners in the recent years when assessing the impact of their projects, which also for the PATH camps confirmed the relevance of international workcamps for promoting non formal learning around different **life competences like autonomy, communication, problem-solving, conflict management.**

Therefore the research assessed the **program logic of PATH**, which assumed that the projects' participants would learn in accordance to Non Formal Education principles, with clear objectives (**Intended**), appropriate activities (**Organised**), and consistent results across organizations and regions (**Replicated**). The **hypothesis** was made that beyond the possible and significant differences in outcomes due to the specific characteristics of the cultural and natural heritage where the projects took place, volunteers across countries and cultures involved in the PATH campaign would all **report increased levels of awareness, interest and engagement in relation to the nine core culture- and heritage-related categories** identified by the stakeholders, from respect to diversity to environmental and cultural knowledge and motivation to preserve the common heritage.

Based on previous research, the hypothesis was also made that volunteers would **improve their self-reported score on general items of personal, interpersonal and social development.**



Figure 1. Program logic and research framework diagram



The final surveys answered by the volunteers were designed as a **pre-post test**, in order to **examine differences before and after their participation in the PATH camps**. The questionnaires were sent out within 3 weeks before the beginning (pre-test) and 3 weeks after the end (post-test) of the project they participated in. The **49 individual survey items** were identical in the pre-test and the post-test, and participants were asked to answer Likert-item values to describe their opinion concerning each specific statement (e.g.: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). Single items were clustered in order to create composite indicators addressing the different **thematic constructs** corresponding to the goals and objectives of the projects, and **individual and program variables** were included in order to control for influencing factors. The post assessment also addressed the participants' satisfaction with different elements of the programs, and in particular with the **perceived**

Figure 2. Example of thematic construct (Autonomy) including individual items and influencing variables

<p>Principal Component Analysis - $\alpha = .79$ Bivariate Analysis - $t = 4.536$, $df = 463$, $p < .001$</p> <p>Pre-test / Post-test Questions (Composite Indicators)</p> <p>I like to reach my objectives and to finish what I start .732 I like taking initiative .727 I feel I can travel by myself .639 I feel able and confident to deal with my professional life and institutional bureaucracy (administration, taxes, insurances) .669 I feel I can stay focused on my work .597</p>	<p>AUTONOMY</p> <p><i>"...I feel I can travel by myself"</i></p> <p>Before: 4.364 / 5 After: 4.640 / 5</p> <p>+0.276 change (+6.3%)</p>
--	--



Individual variables

Prior experience: returned volunteers that had already participated in another type of international program at home or abroad reported higher ratings



Program variables

Region: volunteers who served in Africa rated significantly higher on self-confidence than both Europe and Asia



meaningfulness and outcomes of the work performed, both for their own experience and growth as well as for the communities involved.

The surveys were answered by **185 volunteers** from **44 different countries**, **69% female and 31% male**. The **average age was 24**, almost two years older than the average workcamp participant, with only a slight majority of participants being **students (52%)**, a much lower proportion when compared to the general workcamp population. The number of participants reporting being **employed (31%)** similarly represents the highest percentage of active workers engaged as volunteers in CCIVS campaigns, as it's the number of persons **unemployed or looking for a job at the time of their project (17%)**. These data suggest that the peculiar characteristics of heritage-related projects, involving a stronger knowledge and skills development dimension, as well as being implemented around and for the preservation of culturally significant sites, might attract a more diverse public towards international voluntary service projects¹.

Table 2. Individual and predictive variables - Comparison with other CCIVS global campaigns and workcamp averages

Individual Variables	P.A.T.H.	Raising Peace*	Climate Justice*	International Workcamps*
Gender	69% Female 31% Male	71% Female 29% Male	66% Female 34% Male	74% Female 26% Male
Age average	24 years	23 years	22 years	22 years
Status	52% Students 31% Working 17% Unemployed	67% Students 23% Working 10% Unemployed	76% students 20% Working 2% Unemployed	84% Students 13% working 3% Unemployed
Predictive Variables	P.A.T.H.	Raising Peace	Climate Justice	International Workcamps
Training / Orientation	47% Yes 53% No	27% Yes 73% No	39% Yes 61% No	27% Yes 73% No
Prior volunteer experience	57% Yes 43% No	61% Yes 39% No	65% Yes 35% No	56% Yes 44% No
Experience abroad	81% yes 19% No	76% Yes 24% No	86% Yes 14% No	91% Yes 9% No

A certain number of **predictive variables** such as **training, prior volunteer experience and experience abroad** were also included because of their known positive influence on the overall learning outcomes of volunteers' experience: a higher number of participants than in other CCIVS campaigns had **received targeted pre-departure training/orientation (47%)**, confirming the specific needs and preparation of heritage-related projects; over half of the people surveyed

¹ *Data regarding the demographics of International Workcamps participants were collected during the "Changing Perspectives" project coordinated by Solidarités Jeunesses, France, with the support of the Erasmus+ program. Data regarding CCIVS "Raising Peace" and "Climate Justice" programs were collected during the implementation of the 2019 campaigns, with the support of the Erasmus+ program and of the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. Over 1,000 volunteers have answered surveys in the framework of these researches.



were at their first volunteer experience (57%), and almost one in every five persons had never been abroad (19%).

III.

HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABILITY DIMENSIONS

Summary of outcomes

Table 3. Percentage of change by individual items - Heritage and Sustainability

Item description (identical questions were asked before and after the project)	% of change
I have a good knowledge of the cultures and heritage of the local community where the project takes place	+21.4%
I have a good knowledge of the cultures and heritage of the hosting country where the project takes place	+15.4%
I feel I have technical / manual skills useful to protect and preserve cultural and/or natural heritage	+9.5%
I think about the consequences of my daily actions on the environment, culture and society	+8.2%
I feel I have knowledge and ideas useful to protect and preserve cultural heritage and diversity	+6.7%
I participate actively in preserving, promoting and protecting cultural heritage and diversity	+5.9%
I believe that local knowledge can contribute to the sustainability of cultural practices, expressions, artifacts and spaces (intangible heritage)	+5.0%
I am committed to take action for the preservation of cultural heritage and diversity	+5.0%
I believe that local knowledge can contribute to the sustainability of environmental and cultural sites (tangible heritage)	+2.9%

Looking at the major categories set by the PATH stakeholders, two in particular achieved statistical significance - that is, differences in the volunteers' reported scores after the camps that are not likely to be due to chance, but caused by their participation in the PATH camps: in terms of general feeling and attitudes towards society and diversity, both the volunteers' **openness to interacting with other cultures** as well as their **feeling of living in an inclusive society** show important increases, reflecting a positive effect of the camps on these major program objectives.

Beyond the wide goal of stimulating cultural openness and inclusion, the projects also reached more specific objectives related to the arising among the volunteers of a spirit of deeper **respect for people who hold different values, heritage and identity than their own**, another item showing



positive differences after the camps. Such respect also seems to be deeply rooted in the unique interaction proposed by the PATH projects through activities stimulating at the same time the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains: not only volunteers report higher levels of **knowledge of the cultures and heritage of both the *hosting country* and the *community* where their project took place**; they also feel that they now possess both more **technical and manual skills** and more **knowledge and ideas useful to protect and preserve cultural and natural heritage and diversity**.

Participating in a PATH camp also brought the volunteers to recognise more the role of communities in the preservation of heritage: in particular, the surveys after the projects show positive differences in how much they believe that **local knowledge can contribute to the sustainability of both *tangible heritage* (environmental and cultural sites) and *intangible heritage* (cultural practices, expressions, artefacts and spaces)**.

Finally, the unique combination of awareness-raising and hands-on activities proposed by the PATH camps is also reflected in the way volunteers project themselves positively into the future as conscious actors of the society: they now reportedly **think more about the consequences of their daily actions on the environment, culture and society**, and they show a **stronger commitment to take action for the preservation of cultural heritage and diversity**.

IV.

PERSONAL, INTERPERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Summary of outcomes

While PATH projects strongly focused on heritage and the associated set of skills, knowledge and attitudes, participants also reported statistically significant changes in terms of **problem-solving, conflict management and feeling of integration**: in particular, after the project they were more likely to look at problems as opportunities, and to report feelings of living in an inclusive society; they were also less afraid of conflicts and felt more capable of dealing with them.

Table 4. Percentage of change by individual items - Personal, Interpersonal and Social development

Item description (Identical questions were asked before and after the project)	% of change
When I encounter problems, I understand them as opportunities that will improve my life and myself	+7.4%
I feel that I live in an inclusive society	+6.0%
I am afraid of conflicts and find it difficult to deal with them	-4.8%

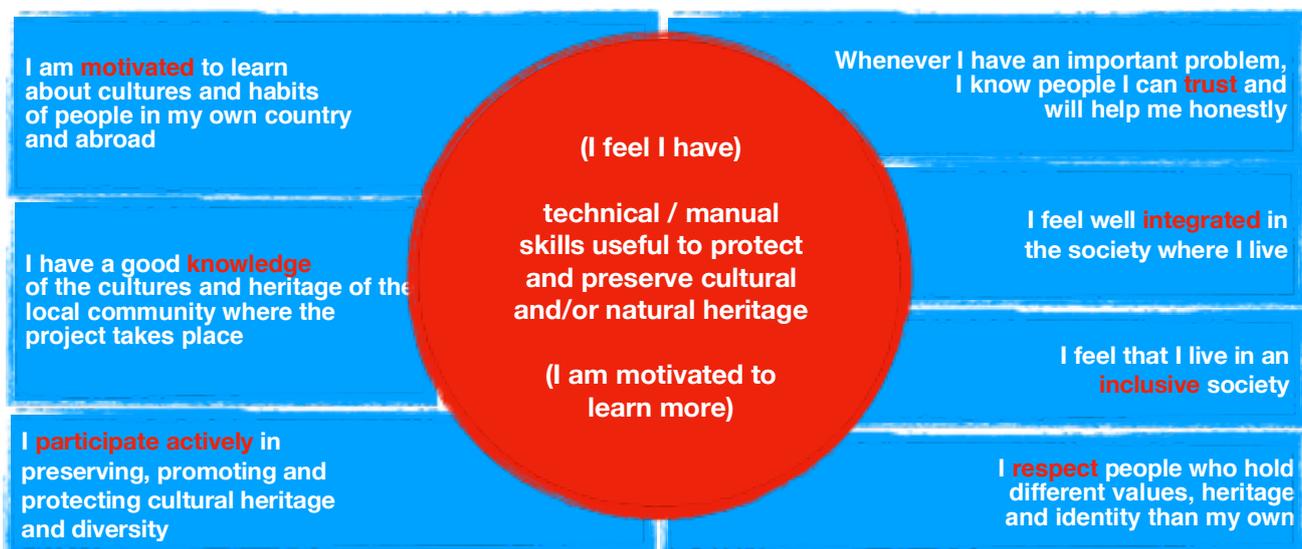


V.

CORRELATIONS: TECHNICAL SKILLS AS A BRIDGE

An analysis of the correlations between variables showed an intricate network of **connections pointing at the intersections between volunteers' motivation, perceived skills and knowledge, and feelings and attitudes towards society and diversity**. As it could be expected given the coherence of the heritage approach, many of the **thematic dimensions described above (see table 3) presented medium to strong positive correlations** (Pearson's coefficients oscillating between $r = 0.550$ and $r = 0.743$ among different binomia), with all of them proportionally increasing their scores together after the projects.

Figure 3. Medium to strong statistically significant correlations between technical/manual skills and different thematic items



One element (figure 3) of the web of correlations identified is worth particular attention because of its symbolic value: at the core of the very idea of international voluntary service since the first workcamps in the 1920s, the practical **work** - and more specifically the **manual skills** associated to it, whether they are possessed or learnt by the volunteers during the project - **connect every important learning outcomes of the projects**. Statistics, indicating medium to strong correlations with such diverse items, confirm the **central role of manual work connecting motivation, knowledge, active participation, but also trust, feelings of integration, inclusion and respect**. While correlations are not, as it is important to repeat, causation - and we cannot therefore say that these learnings depend on the acquisition of manual skills and directly on the manual work performed by the volunteers, we can certainly rejoice to see confirmed by the data the funding assumption of international voluntary service: that most **learnings are connected, to different degrees but always in a positive relationship, with work**.



VI. PROJECT SATISFACTION

Finally, the success of the holistic approach taken by PATH is also demonstrated by the fact that the **meaningfulness attributed to the work performed** during the projects was not only significantly positively **correlated to almost all composite outcomes variables described in this report** (both those specific to heritage and those concerning the participants’ personal, interpersonal and social development); but it was also **over one point higher than the average score given by general international workcamp participants**: this seems to reflect well the investment made by CCIVS and all stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the campaign, and the **relevance of the program’s Partnerships, Actions and Tools for Heritage - in brief, of P.A.T.H.**



Table 5. Project satisfaction- Comparison between PATH projects and International Workcamps in general

Satisfaction about the PATH projects	PATH	International Workcamps
On a 0 to 10 scale, how satisfied are you with the project you have joined?	8.830	8.310
On a 0 to 10 scale, how satisfied are you with the practical results of the work performed during the project?	8.320	7.560
On a 0 to 10 scale, how meaningful do you think the work performed during the project was?	8.410	7.300
On a 0 to 10 scale, how would you rate your willingness to recommend this experience to your close friends and family?	9.140	8.710

*Data regarding the satisfaction of International Workcamps participants were collected during the “Changing Perspectives” project coordinated by Solidarités Jeunesses, France, with the support of the Erasmus+ program. Over 800 volunteers have answered the questions concerned.

