



VOLUNTEER IMPACT QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL – JUNE 2020

Prepared by the Volunteer Engagement Team – October 2020



OXFAM
Australia

Oxfam Australia, October 2020

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Acknowledgements: Oxfam Australia acknowledges
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Photo credit: Olivia Boulud.

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1.Executive Summary

Volunteerism in the face of the COVID-19 global pandemic has forever redefined when, how and why volunteers and interns engage with non-profit organisations. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant impacts for volunteers, interns and their engagement at Oxfam Australia, but has also enabled and fostered a sense of innovation in how volunteers and interns are connected to the organisation. The global crisis has exemplified the resilient and adaptative nature of Oxfam Australia's volunteer and intern community.

This is the fourth report developed by the Volunteer Engagement Team (VET) at Oxfam Australia to measure the level and nature of the impact of volunteer and intern contributions. For the purpose of this report, volunteers and interns will be collectively referred to as volunteers. This report will specifically analyse the impact both of volunteer contributions as well as the impacts to Oxfam Australia's volunteer community from the period of 1 April until 30 June 2020 and in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report will determine that the impact of volunteers at Oxfam Australia continues to be substantive, albeit in a much different form. This report is comprised of two main sections, the first analyses the nature of volunteer contributions throughout the quarter, firstly by completing an analysis into the demographical makeup of the agency's volunteer community in the form of an infographic. It then analyses the number of hours completed by volunteers, the feedback provided by volunteers as a result of contributions made and an analysis into the nature of volunteer roles, both generally and in the form of a detailed profile of a volunteer role at the Fair Trade Shop in WA. The second section of this report will analyse the financial and non-financial impacts of volunteer contribution at Oxfam Australia.

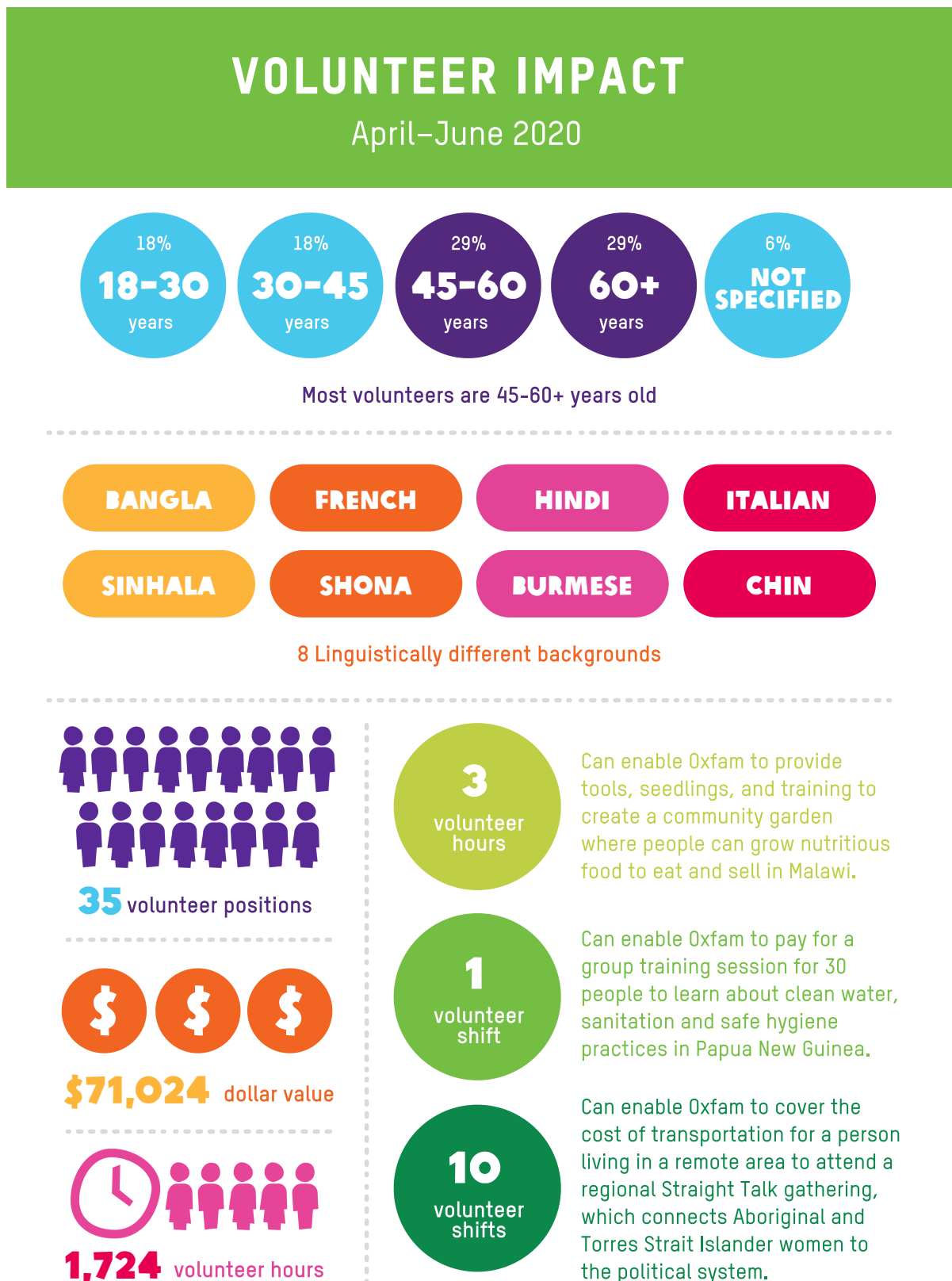
A literature review is also provided, detailing the correlation between mental health and social impacts in the context of volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic. Key recommendations and conclusions for consideration will follow, so to ensure the continual fostering and enhancement of volunteer engagement within the agency.

2.Key findings

- Data shows a 38 percent increase in volunteer hours compared to the previous quarter due to the inclusion of data from the Oxfam Bookshop Adelaide. The financial value of this increase is \$27,250.
- There was a 50 percent reduction in the total number of office volunteers contributing hours.
- The average number of hours is 47; approximately 11 hours greater compared to the previous quarter due to the inclusion of the Oxfam Bookshop Adelaide volunteer data.
- 100 percent of volunteers indicated their experience was 'good' or 'very good' when providing feedback.
- Research showed that people who were able to volunteer during the pandemic maintained pre-COVID-19 levels of wellbeing, compared to those who had to cease their volunteering role.
- The COVID-19 pandemic impacted social capital in relation to volunteering, however enhancement of virtual volunteering and initiatives by volunteer-involving organisations have ensured that social capital is sustained, (albeit at lower levels).

3. Volunteers at Oxfam Australia

3.1. Infographic



Graphic: Maddison Kraus/Oxfam Australia

3.2. Volunteer hours at Oxfam Australia

This section outlines the total number of volunteer hours recorded for 1 April to 30 June 2020. The data was obtained by completing a search for logged hours on Better Impact, Oxfam Australia's volunteer management system. There were 1,724 recorded hours for the period of 1 April until 30 June 2020. This figure is roughly 38 percent higher compared to the previous quarter despite the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic and Oxfam Australia's offices remaining closed. This higher figure can be attributed to the inclusion of hours contributed by volunteers at the Oxfam Bookshop in Adelaide.

The quarter recorded a 50 percent reduction of office volunteer numbers across the organisation compared to the previous quarter, with the total number of volunteers and interns logging hours being 17 compared to 34 in the previous quarter. The overall number of volunteers remains at 35 due to inclusion of Bookshop volunteers. The average number of hours completed by volunteers is 11 hours greater compared to the previous quarter.

Volunteers were engaged in fewer sections of the organisation, in six teams compared to nine during the previous quarter. The Fair Trade Shop in WA recorded a significant number of hours following the re-opening of the store in May. Volunteers completing hours in office-based roles or based in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland have predominantly been working remotely since March which would also explain the reduction in hours.

Since the office shutdown period commenced on March 18th, a number of volunteers have successfully transitioned to working remotely. Several roles, primarily internships, have been commenced and finished entirely remotely.

Unit/Team	Hours	Volunteers
Oxfam Bookshop – Adelaide (SA)	877	18
Fair Trade Shop (WA)	297	8
Supporter Services (VIC)	197	3
Executive, Governance & Legal	168	1
Public Engagement – Advocacy & Campaigns (VIC)	97	1
Capability & Impact (VIC)	38	2
Brisbane Office (QLD)	32	1
Programs: Development & Effectiveness (VIC)	18	1
Total	1,724	35

Table 1: Volunteer hours by 'impact account' 1 April 2020 – 30 June 2020.

- Data sourced via Better Impact on 1 September 2020. Any additional hours submitted for the reporting period may not be included in this analysis.
- Volunteers may be engaged in multiple roles within the organisation simultaneously, which would explain a discrepancy in volunteer numbers.
- Only hours logged by volunteers/volunteer managers are included and may not be a whole representation of the total hours committed by volunteers or interns.
- Impact accounts are reflective of the Oxfam Australia organisation structure as of 1 April, 2020.
- Hours recorded by the Adelaide Oxfam Bookshop are an estimate based on the average number of hours completed by volunteers during one quarter.

3.3. Volunteer Feedback at Oxfam Australia

Feedback provided at an organisational level

This section analyses the level of feedback provided by volunteers during the reporting period. Analysing feedback is a critical indicator to understanding the satisfaction and experience of volunteers and interns. At Oxfam Australia, volunteers are encouraged to submit feedback at the commencement each shift when they log their hours via the 'My Impact' portal delivered by Better Impact. This data is aggregated across the organisation and analysed on a monthly and quarterly basis by the VET. Volunteers are able to provide feedback in the form of rating their experience from 'very good' to 'very poor'. Volunteers are also able to provide written feedback if they wish to provide a more detailed account of their experience.

The first table indicates that overall, volunteers and interns are satisfied with their experience, with 100 percent of volunteers either indicating a 'good' or 'very good' experience. This is a positive result compared to the previous quarter's result of 98.2 percent for the same measure.

Feedback totals	Total number	Percentage
Very good	49	59.76%
Good	33	40.24%
Average	0	0.00%
Poor	0	0.00%
Very poor	0	0.00%
Total (responses)	82	100.00%

Table 2: Feedback totals by at an organisational level: Better Impact – 4 September 2020.

- Volunteers log hours for individual shifts and not their overall experience as a volunteer.
- Figures exclude Oxfam Trailwalker and Oxfam Bookshop Adelaide volunteers.

Feedback provided by section/unit

The table below analyses the same data but at a sectional/unit level. This table outlines only responses whereby volunteers have indicated 'very good'. It should be acknowledged that if a unit/section recorded a low response, it may not necessarily be a negative result as volunteers and interns may also indicate 'good'. The data in this table indicates that volunteers within the Public Engagement – Advocacy & Campaigns section has an extremely positive experience as did volunteers from the Fair Trade Shop in Western Australia.

Volunteer feedback totals (by Unit/Section)	Total Number (very good)	Percentage	Total responses
Fair Trade Shop (WA)	37	64.91%	57
Supporter Services (VIC)	No data	No data	No data
Public Engagement – Advocacy & Campaigns (VIC)	12	100%	12
Capability & Impact (VIC)	0	0.00%	13
Executive, Governance & Legal	No data	No data	No data
Brisbane Office (QLD)	No data	No data	No data
Programs: Development & Effectiveness (VIC)	No data	No data	No data
Total (responses)	49		82

Table 3: Volunteer feedback total by unit/section. Better Impact – 4 September 2020.

- A low result may not be indicative of volunteers' overall experience or satisfaction within the unit/section collectively due to the small amount of data contributed from that team.
- Figures exclude Oxfam Trailwalker and Oxfam Bookshop Adelaide volunteers.
- Impact accounts are reflective of the Oxfam Australia organisation structure as of 1 April 2020.

3.4. Volunteer and Intern roles at Oxfam Australia

The number of volunteer and intern roles this quarter was comparatively lower to the previous, but the scope of roles completed by volunteers was diverse, with volunteers and interns engaged in four states. Volunteers and interns were engaged in five sections of the organisation plus the Oxfam Bookshop Adelaide and the Fair Trade Shop WA. Most roles were completed remotely due to the continuation of the office-shutdown. This period also saw the engagement of several interns in both the Public Engagement: Advocacy & Campaigns section as well as in the Programs: Development & Effectiveness section, who completed their placements either partially or entirely remote/virtually. New volunteer positions also commenced during this period in Finance and the Volunteer Engagement Team.

Cross-theme Advocacy Support Internship	Fair Trade Shop Volunteer (Western Australia)
Social and Economic Empowerment Design Toolkit Internship	Key Supporter Research Assistant
Social Engagement Volunteer	Supporter Services Regular Volunteer
Volunteer Finance Consultant	Corrs Chambers Westgarth Secondment
Oxfam Bookshop Adelaide Volunteer: Shop Volunteer, Committee, Workroom, Collection & Recycling and Social Media	

Table 4: Description of volunteer roles at Oxfam Australia. Better Impact – 4 September, 2020.

3.5. Volunteer profile: Lauren Baker (Fair Trade Shop WA)



Greece: Lauren Baker (pictured far right) enjoying volunteering abroad with her colleagues. Photo: Supplied by Lauren Baker.

Lauren Baker volunteers at the Fair Trade Shop in WA, which supports Oxfam Australia by donating all of its profits to the agency. Lauren spoke of her early memories associated with Oxfam: “ever since I can remember, I have wanted to work for Oxfam. I visited the Fremantle (Oxfam) shop as a child and fell in love with the colours, smells, toys and trinkets, and knew this is where I needed to be someday”. Lauren started her journey volunteering at the Fair Trade Shop in 2017. Later that year, Lauren volunteered in Greece as a coordinator for a creative centre for refugees on the island of Chios. The volunteers in the Fair Trade Shop were supportive of this and warmly welcomed Lauren back on her return to WA. Lauren now volunteers every Wednesday with her friend and fellow volunteer Kerry. “We spend our time in the store talking to customers about products, buying products from suppliers such as Better World Arts, and laughing the day away. I truly cherish my time at the Fair Trade Shop”. Lauren mentions that her best volunteer experience at Oxfam was when she was working on the Close the Gap Campaign in 2018. Lauren assisted with the creation of a Close the Gap banner signed with handprints by members of parliament; Lauren emailed all new members of parliament requesting their prints. The banner was showcased at the Close the Gap Festival in May 2018, where Lauren volunteered and saw the amazing work being done to increase equity for Australia’s First Peoples.

Lauren is passionate about the What She Makes and Close the Gap campaigns. “I strongly support women’s rights and women’s empowerment, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples health and equity. The What She Makes campaign highlights the failure of big brands, and demands giving employees a fair wage. I believe it is important for Australians to be aware of who makes their clothes, and if they are being treated fairly and have basic human rights, which most women employed in the fashion industry do not.” Lauren also highlighted how studying a degree in Nutrition and Health Promotion at Curtin University has provided her with “the privilege of learning just how much of a gap there is in Australia between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and how important it is for the work to continue, particularly the work Oxfam has contributed to in achieving equality.”

Lauren also regularly volunteers with the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Program and at Clontarf Aboriginal College providing literacy support. She enjoys travelling and long walks around Perth. Of her time volunteering at the Fair Trade Shop, Lauren says “In my three years at Oxfam, I feel extremely lucky and grateful to have worked with and met so many incredible people. The warmth of the volunteers, the support from Oxfam, and knowing that we are contributing to the empowerment and support for disadvantaged people around the world every time we volunteer in the shop are just some of the reasons why I still to volunteer, and hope to continue long into the future.”

4. Impact of volunteering at Oxfam Australia

4.1. Mental health impacts on volunteering in the context of COVID-19

It is well known that volunteers contribute significantly to society by making up a large portion of the unpaid workforce, and are often engaged in services that serve the most vulnerable in society. Muller et al. 2017: 24; Biddle & Gray 2020: 8). It is also becoming increasingly known that in addition to the value volunteers add to an organisation, there are also various benefits for the volunteers themselves. (Biddle & Gray 2020: 8). There has been extensive research into the benefits and positive effects of volunteering on mental and physical health (Casidy et al., 2008: 6). As well as providing a sense of purpose and a sense of doing something good, volunteering also contributes to increasing self-confidence and helps lessen the negative effects of anxiety, stress and anger, leading to an overall improved sense of well-being (Jenkinson et al 2013., 2; Casidy et al., 2008: 4). Volunteering regularly, compared to a few times a year, also contributes to increased levels of wellbeing (Lawton et al., 2020: 4). This is further demonstrated through research conducted by the Centre for Social Research and Methods at the Australian National University, whose study found that those who were able to continue volunteering amidst COVID-19, were able to maintain their wellbeing and mental health levels compared to those who were unable to continue volunteering (Biddle & Gray 2020: 8).

The positive impacts of volunteering are therefore especially important within the context of COVID-19. As a result of restrictions on movement, a lot of volunteering activity has stopped, at great cost to the work volunteers contribute to as well as to the wellbeing of the volunteers themselves (Biddle & Gray 2020: 3, 6). This impact is felt across a wide range of sectors including aged care, nursing homes, not-for-profit agencies and emergency services (Muller et al., 2017: 8). With lowered economic and social activity, and as more individuals experience the effects of social isolation, there is likely an increase in demand for these services, especially for those whose vulnerability is exacerbated by the pandemic (Biddle & Gray 2020: 8; Social Ventures Australia, Centre for Social Impact 2020: 3). All of this highlights the importance of volunteering not just for organisations themselves, but also for the wellbeing of the volunteers as well. Within Oxfam Australia, the number of volunteers that have been able to volunteer has shifted over the last quarter, with 9 active volunteers from April - May and 11 from May - June. The VET have been in regular contact with volunteers at Oxfam Australia over the last quarter, checking in on their wellbeing during the pandemic. This research also emphasises positive impacts that organisations such as Oxfam Australia can have on volunteers and the wider community it engages with and presents a positive reason for teams within Oxfam Australia to engage volunteers.

4.2. Social impacts in the context of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the unprecedented decreasing of social capital. Volunteerism is an integral force to fostering social capital and connection, particularly in demographics less likely to be engaged with society. Research by the Centre for Social Research & Methods found that 65.9 percent of volunteers who contributed hours in February had ceased by April (Biddle & Gray 2020: 3). Research by Volunteering Victoria in April concludes of organisations surveyed, 33 percent were retaining volunteers at the same numbers as before the pandemic (Volunteering Victoria 2020). While social impact can be difficult to tangibly quantify, there are generally two differing forms which have been analysed for the purpose of this report. These are the impacts that benefit the organisations as a result of volunteer contribution and, the impact which volunteers themselves receive. Wu identifies several indicators which social impact can be measured in relation to the volunteering provided by volunteers. The foremost of which is the strengthening of social connections which is defined through activities such as networking, community partnerships and participation (Wu 2011: 11). Putnam (2000) explains that social participation enhances the functions of social networks by enabling members to actively utilise and maintain social networks. The second defining, and visible benefit is the impact volunteering has on the communities or beneficiaries that their contributions provide for. This is particularly pertinent to volunteers who make contributions in community-based organisations. The Centre for Social Research & Methods argues the pandemic may affect the delivery and quality of services that the community benefits from, particularly vulnerable

populations who are more likely to utilise services provided by community involving organisations (Biddle & Gray 2020: 5).

Despite a decrease in volunteering, there have been some positive impacts due to COVID-19. Makridis & Wu (2020) emphasise in times of crisis that social capital and transactional social exchanges have subtle benefits such as the accumulation of human capital, as well as the promotion of further collaboration (Makridis & Wu 2020). Wu (2011: 11) argues that volunteering is a 'public good' which enables the third sector to more efficiently deliver benefits in the form of goods and services to communities, particularly when the market or government are inefficient. With regard to benefits to the volunteers themselves, Wu highlights that volunteering enables the enhancement of career opportunities, interpersonal skills, and networking opportunities (Wu 2011: 11). Rochelle & Shardlow (2012: 729) express a similar argument in relation to enhancing the skills of immigrants. Initial research into the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 has concluded that those from lower socio-economic background, different cultural backgrounds, vulnerable populations and young people are disproportionately affected by the pandemic (O' Sullivan, Rahamathulla and Pawar 2020: 140). Biddle and Gray (2020: 2) also argue that people who reside in less advantaged localities are less likely to volunteer. Sikora & Green (2020: 180) emphasise student volunteers in Australia from more privileged socio-economic background and populations who speak English as a first language are overrepresented in volunteer demographics compared to volunteers from lower socio-economic backgrounds. It can be discerned that volunteering can provide a pathway for underrepresented populations to seek greater engagement with the community, which will be imperative to ensure a more equitable post-COVID recovery.

4.3. Financial impacts

At Oxfam Australia, the financial impact of volunteerism is measured through a calculation of volunteer hours against an hourly remunerated rate. This figure is also used to produce a value that outlines the full-time equivalent of all volunteer contributions. The figure for this period is \$27,246 higher than the previous quarter. The number of hours contributed by office volunteers was lower due to the progression of COVID-19, but the value is higher due to the inclusion of hours recorded by Oxfam Bookshop Adelaide. Volunteers in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth who continued to contribute hours during this period completed on average 11 hours more compared to the previous quarter.

Number of volunteer roles	FTE (full-time equivalent)	Estimated dollar value (AUD)
35	1.0 (annually) / 4.0 (quarterly)	\$71,024

Table 5: Financial impact and volunteerism at Oxfam Australia. Source: Better Impact/Volunteer Engagement Team – 18 September, 2020.

- Based on Salary Category 5A (April 2020).
- Data is not inclusive of data where hours have not been logged/lodged by volunteers and so the true figure may be higher.

4.4. Non-financial impacts

Outcomes: Supporter Services

Volunteers in the Supporter Services team provide highly valued assistance to the pivotal work of the team and the agency who are responsible for delivering Oxfam's fundraising and campaigns messages to the public. Highlighted below are the contributions of volunteers within the team, many of whom have been an active volunteer with Oxfam Australia for an extended period.

Activity	Value
Batches	5
Database amendments	100
Incoming mail (return to sender)	1,486
Outgoing mail (welcome letters)	200

Table 6: Supporter Services Team data at Oxfam Australia. Source: Better Impact/VET 18 September, 2020.

Dollar handles

The VET also measures volunteer impact through other non-financial impacts such as dollar handles. Dollar handles provided supporters, stakeholders and the wider public with an understanding of how monetary contributions are invested back into Oxfam Australia's program work. The VET pairs these outcomes to the value of volunteer hours to illustrate how contributions made by volunteers and interns can make a tangible and significant impact on Oxfam's work.

Time contributed	Outcome
One hour	<p>Can enable Oxfam to provide a cubic litre of clean water from Oxfam's solar-powered desalination plant in Yemen.</p> <p>Can enable Oxfam to provide a hygiene kit with the essentials to keep a family living in a Rohingya refugee camp safe in Bangladesh.</p> <p>Can enable Oxfam to provide a family in Indonesia with soap, hand sanitiser and masks for three months to stop the rapid spread of COVID-19 in the densely populated suburbs in Jakarta.</p>
Three hours (half of one shift)	<p>Can enable Oxfam to provide tools, seedlings, and training to create a community garden where people can grow nutritious food to eat and sell in Malawi.</p> <p>Can enable Oxfam to support a local community radio station for Indigenous women in Ratanakiri province, Cambodia, giving them a forum where they can discuss issues concerning their lives and communities.</p>
One shift (one average)	<p>Can enable Oxfam to pay for a group training session for 30 people to learn about clean water, sanitation and safe hygiene practices in Papua New Guinea.</p> <p>Can enable Oxfam to provide the tools, seeds and training for a whole community to learn innovative farming practices such as terraced gardens in Timor Leste, increasing their food security over the long-term.</p>

Six shifts of volunteering (six weeks on average)	<p>Can enable Oxfam to buy an automated chlorinator and start up supply of chlorine tablets for a public water supply system, so families can access clean, safe drinking water in Zambia.</p> <p>Can enable Oxfam to build two flood-resilient wells that supply approximately 20 families with access to clean and safe drinking water in Bangladesh. The tube wells are designed to have universal access, including a seat rest, stairs, ramp and hand railing, ensuring every person has equal access.</p>
Ten shifts of volunteering (about 2.5 months on average)	<p>Can enable Oxfam to cover the cost of transportation for a person living in a remote area to attend a regional Straight Talk gathering, which connects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to the political system.</p> <p>Can enable Oxfam to launch one quarterly youth front media program highlighting women and youth voices for their socio-political, cultural and economic rights in Pakistan.</p>

Table 7: Dollar handles/volunteer hours comparison. Source: Oxfam Australia

- The financial value of volunteering based on Salary Category 5A (April 2020).
- One volunteer shift = the average timespan for a shift completed by an office volunteer (6 hours).



Image: (Yemen) Oxfam water engineer Monther Alattar, repairs a solar panel that powers a desalination plant in the town of Almusaimir. Oxfam has installed three water supply systems that work with solar panels which has brought has halved the cost of water delivery of traditional trucking methods. Photo Credit: Pablo Tosco/Oxfam.

5.Future directions

5.1. Measuring our progress

An important part of the Volunteer Quarterly Impact Report is to analyse progress made since the previous report. Measuring progress on previous recommendations is a critical way the VET remains accountable for advocating for and advancing volunteerism within the agency. This review also provides Oxfam Australia's volunteer community, staff, and stakeholders with a greater understanding of the current priorities and work of the VET.

Recommendation (Jan-Mar 2020 report)	Timeline	Progress
Visibility of the VET, as well as the volunteer program generally should be enhanced as demand for volunteer services will increase following the end of the office shutdown period.	Continuous. Reviewed quarterly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. VET staff active on RAP committee, Workplace Health & Safety Committee, OxGlam. 2. Increased posts on Workplace and other internal communications. 3. Impact reports directly sent to Executive Leadership Team.
Greater emphasis should be placed on evaluating, recognising and fostering the social and other non-financial impacts of volunteerism at an organisational level.	Evaluated by the end of 2020.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current report focuses on mental health research and volunteerism. 2. Further research conducted concerning social impact and volunteerism. 3. Increased communications highlighting non-financial impact (dollar handles) during National Volunteer Week in May.
Greater emphasis should be placed on developing a 'community of volunteers.' Both through fostering an online presence and through more in-person engagement at an office and organisational level.	<p>Online deliverables evaluated by end of August.</p> <p>In-person deliverables evaluated three months following end of office shutdown.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of Oxfam Australia Volunteers Facebook group. 2. Increased communications to volunteers during lockdown through email/Facebook group. Particularly concerning support resources. 3. Ensuring Oxfam volunteers email list is included in all staff emails.
The development of a post-office shutdown volunteer engagement plan should be developed in anticipation of the full office shutdown period concluding before the end of 2020.	Evaluated prior to the conclusion of office-shutdown.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. COVID-safe work plans developed for Fair Trade Shop Perth and Oxfam Bookshop Adelaide. 2. Volunteer needs considered in the Brisbane and Sydney office during accommodation review staff consultation process.
Further planning and consideration should be undertaken to develop a remote volunteering program.	Continuous. Reviewed quarterly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virtual induction resources created and distributed to new volunteers and interns. 2. Remote volunteering onboarding under review, with collaboration with wider People & Culture team. 3. Exit interview with CareerTrackers intern who started and completed their internship entirely remotely.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the above data, new recommendations have been identified to enable the fostering of further levels of engagement and satisfaction of current and prospective volunteers at Oxfam Australia.

Recommendation:	Timeline:
<p>1. The VET to review recruitment processes to ensure equitable engagement practices, particularly in relation to engagement of volunteers from underrepresented demographics.</p> <p><u>Justification:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds, volunteers who do not speak English as a first language, volunteers who identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person and LGBTIQ+ volunteers may face additional barriers to accessing opportunities and may be less represented in volunteer demographics. Working towards creating more equitable practices is aligns with the Gender Justice, and First Peoples Justice goals on the Oxfam Australia 2020 - 2025 Strategic Framework. <p><u>Deliverables:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VET and the wider People & Culture team to review the recruitment process and identify possible barriers, such as recruitment channels and screening checks. Research best practices in relation to equitable recruitment. Establish contact with networks and organisations who can forward opportunities to underrepresented demographics. 	<p>Reviewed end of 2020 and work to implement changes early 2021.</p>
<p>2. Development of a Volunteer Engagement Plan; emphasising post-office shutdown volunteering and intern engagement activities, including identifying office and virtual roles, professional development opportunities and networking.</p> <p><u>Justification:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a Volunteering Engagement Plan will assist the VET with identifying workforce priorities in relation to "COVID-normal" volunteering. Skills building, knowledge gathering, and networking has been identified as primary motivations for volunteers according to recent research. A plan can be implemented which affords volunteers the opportunity to participate in these activities. <p><u>Deliverables:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priorities should be identified relating to projects, communications, and initiatives completed by the VET. VET to attend team meetings and advocate for the engagement of volunteers and interns. VET to identify and contact staff to assist with the delivery of skills building, knowledge gathering and networking opportunities for volunteers. Continue to raise the profile of volunteers through Workplace, meetings, engagement with staff, particularly in relation to International Volunteer Managers Day and International Volunteer Day. 	<p>Identification of priorities should occur prior to the conclusion of 2020.</p>

<p>3. Develop a Strategic Communications Plan to ensure the continuation of communications and activities for volunteers, focusing on social connection, mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p><u>Justification:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications and initiatives with a focus on social connection, mental health and wellbeing have increased from the VET since the office shutdown. • Volunteers have responded positively to the increased level of communication from VET. • A more structured approach to communications is needed to ensure volunteers are receiving an appropriate amount of information from the VET. <p><u>Deliverables:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Communications Plan will clearly set out the purpose and focus of communications to volunteers. • Continued focus will remain on mental health and social connection. • The VET will review the effectiveness of communications as part of the planning process and 6 monthly thereafter. 	<p>Completed by end of 2020 and reviewed 6 monthly thereafter.</p>
<p>4. The VET should focus on identifying volunteer motivations, satisfaction and retention to complement and enhance existing knowledge in the context of volunteers at Oxfam Australia.</p> <p><u>Justification:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying motivations and enhancing knowledge relating to volunteering and what drives satisfaction and retention in Oxfam Australia's volunteer community will be crucial to determining projects and initiatives in this space. <p><u>Deliverables</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VET and volunteer managers to meet with volunteers periodically to determine motivations, goals, and achievements. • Consideration for the introduction of a Volunteer Retention Survey. • Completing further research on volunteer motivations in INGOs. • Encourage volunteers to provide more detailed feedback information on Better Impact, • To complement existing initiatives, optional questions which seek to gauge volunteers' wellbeing may be included as part of the Better Impact feedback fields. 	<p>Initiatives to be developed by end 2020 with implementation in early-to-mid 2021.</p>

6. Conclusion

The COVID-19 global pandemic has continued to significantly impact volunteerism both in Australia and around the world. Organisations have had to adapt their programs to continue delivering services in a setting where there exists a significant degree of uncertainty about the future state of the sector and society generally. Volunteer and intern engagement at Oxfam Australia has been significantly affected, with the suspension of in-person volunteering nationally on 18 March and the implementation of an organisational change process which resulted in the redundancy of 20 office volunteer roles and hundreds of event volunteer roles due to the outsourcing of Trailwalker. Despite these changes, the pandemic has continued to highlight the adaptive, innovative and resilient nature of volunteers and volunteerism generally. The scale and nature of contributions made by volunteers continue to remain significant as the data in this report outlines and exemplifies the importance of volunteering as a driver to enable change and impact.

This report analysed the impact of volunteers at Oxfam Australia between 1 April and 30 June 2020. The report firstly outlined the contributions of Oxfam Australia's volunteering community. An infographic into volunteer demographics, statistics and findings was developed to disseminate key information. An analysis into volunteer hours found that with the inclusion of data from the Oxfam Adelaide Bookshop, there were a total of 1,724 hours completed by approximately 35 volunteers. Volunteer feedback analyses found that 100 percent of volunteers indicated their experience was either 'very good' or 'good'. This report showed that in this quarter, the value of volunteering was approximately \$71,024, which is significantly higher than the previous quarter.

Research into the mental health impacts and social impacts on volunteerism in the context of COVID-19 found that the pandemic has had severe and long-lasting implications relating to isolation and disconnection from the community. COVID-safe volunteering, paired with the introduction of more normalised forms of virtual volunteering will allow populations of the community who have experienced disconnection from society to re-engage. A more equitable response to encouraging volunteers to be recruited to organisations is also crucial to ensure this.

A set of recommendations has been provided which emphasises the importance of continued advocacy and engagement by the VET, as well as a continued emphasis on wellbeing, social connection, skills building and networking. In order to foster a stronger sense of engagement among the agency's volunteer community and to prepare for what volunteering may look like in "COVID normal" world, any response must be one which is considerate, equitable and one that will ensure volunteers can effectively and inclusively contribute to Oxfam Australia's work.

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