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COMHLÁMH ANNUAL REPORT 2016

BE THE CHANGE!



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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear Members and supporters of Comhlámh,

It is a pleasure to be able to report on the progress we have made at Comhlámh in 2016. Our most significant achievement was the new Strategic Plan which was the outcome of an extensive and far-reaching process of consultation with all our stakeholders. Thanks to all those who took part in the process. The new plan was adopted formally by the Board at its meeting in December and we look forward to the involvement of members and wider stakeholders in its implementation.

The Plan is the best expression yet of Comhlámh's principles and objectives. What we do is within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and those Goals themselves are based on partnership and solidarity. Achieving these Goals requires the involvement of all of us, officialdom and civil society. Volunteering is the best expression of the commitment of civil society to improve the life and livelihood of everyone on the planet and to help preserve the planet itself.

We have succeeded in positioning ourselves as the strongest voice and the advocate for good practice in volunteering, in addition to being a centre of information about and support for volunteering. It is very heartening to know that this is now appreciated not just in this country, but increasingly within Europe. What Comhlámh has done is being recognised as a template for the development of volunteering. The work we are now doing with our European partners in Erasmus+ and the European Union Aid Volunteers Initiative helps us share our learning whilst also being a source of great enrichment for the organisation and for the staff.

In spite of the fact that most of our funding comes from official sources, we are completely dependent on our members to make us who we are. It is now a major objective to increase our membership, and I am grateful to the Board members who have started work on this. The membership subscriptions we receive are important to our finances, but it is the vitality and involvement of our members which makes Comhlámh a centre for so much of the discussion, activism and learning which is essential if we are to live up to our ambition of being an important platform for global engagement.

As an outgoing Chair, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my Board colleagues. Serving as a Board member of a not-for-profit is demanding. The requirements for high standards of governance and for absolute transparency are as high, if not higher, as for a large commercial organisation. But the resources to prepare and provide the required information and documentation is far less. Board members must be prepared to engage with the work of the organisation and to share their enthusiasm. This the current Board has done.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Head of Comhlámh, Mark Cumming for his dedication and hard work and to all the staff who have worked with enthusiasm and commitment.

I would like to thank our partners and funders, in particular Irish Aid along with Concern Worldwide, Trócaire, The Wheel and the European Commission, through Léargas and through our partners La Gulde and France Volontaires.

We are grateful to our Solidarity Partners, this circle of partners has grown to 16 organisations, including Action Aid, EIL Intercultural Learning, Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation, Umbrella Foundation, Brighter Communities Worldwide, Irish Rule of Law, Kimmage Development Studies Centre, Nurture Africa, Sacred Heart Missionaries, Sarah Bird Foundation, SERVE in Solidarity, UCDVO, Viatores Christi, Vincentian Lay Missionaries, Volunteer Mission Movement, and Young Friends of the Earth.

Katherine Meenan

Chairperson

10/5/17



REPORT INTRODUCTION

Dear Members and supporters of Comhlámh,

I enjoyed 2016. Many things that we have been working on for some time have come together. The work to be relevant and at the fore-front of things remains on-going. Surviving financially is an on-going struggle, but in all this, we have made solid progress.

As many of you will have heard me say, there are two currencies, money and time. With the right facilitation and nurturing we can and do mobilise the time of a sector of people in Ireland. This is life-giving, it's a privilege to be involved in shaping people's capacity to reflect critically on the world around them, it's very satisfying.

I am often asked, *'to what end all this work you are doing'*, *'what does it matter that people can think critically'*? And while there are many ways I could go about addressing that, perhaps in it's most distilled form it is because the world is not in a good place. The problems we collectively face as peoples are manifold and complex, and they demand an engaged and critical public. And it is here that Comhlámh seeks and commits to respond with responsibility, possibility and hope.

Whether as people thinking of getting involved in international volunteering for development, volunteers seeking spaces and allies to work for social justice upon return, new communities living in Ireland and others working for global justice, Comhlámh takes seriously the desires and relevance of facilitating an in-depth understanding of the world. We work to assist people reach new levels of awareness of poverty, inequality and oppression. And of becoming part of effective processes for changing the world.

One of my most rewarding parts of the year is comparing our aspirations and commitments with outcomes from people who have come through our building, participated in courses, sessions and training. *'I thought the way you allowed us to do our own thinking gradually was effective and makes it more permanent in my mind'*; *'this workshop has really made me aware of my own intentions for volunteering and the importance of researching the project you want to contribute to.'* *'I feel stronger doing my work knowing that organisations like Comhlámh and trainers are so supportive'*; *'as the weeks progressed I felt my confidence growing.'*; *'the more we came to know each other, the more willing I was to get involved in the discussions we were having. I found the sessions to be very thought provoking. They promoted the value of people working together to figure out ways to tackle issues like unfair global trade systems, racism or gender inequality.'*

2016 marked the end of the current strategic plan as we began a process of a rolling conversation from March through to December in which we built our strategic plan for the coming five years. I feel this is a significant advance on the previous plan, with a clearer focus and realignment of historical values evermore relevant today.

We are deeply indebted to Partners – Training for Transformation for the wonderful advice, guidance and facilitation they provided in this process. It was also a lot of fun. You can read more in the report that follows and download the plan off our site.

It has been a pleasure to work with an ever-growing circle of enquiring, dynamic and engaged people at various points in their journey in their work for global development. I lost less sleep and developed fewer grey hairs (the little that is there) than prior years! That's positive, I look forward to meeting many of you in 2017 and beyond.



In solidarity,

Mark Cumming

Head of Comhlámh

10/5/16

LOOKING BACK ON OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2016

Comhlámh's strategic plan for 2012-2016 positioned the association as the leading voice on volunteering and action for development. Comhlámh has made significant progress across all of its stated objectives: Leading voice and source of information on volunteering; coordinator of good practice in volunteering; supporting critical engagement in volunteering and action for development; membership development.

LEADING VOICE AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON VOLUNTEERING

Comhlámh has made significant progress across all of its stated objectives in 2016:

Leading voice on volunteering; coordinator of good practice and supporting critical engagement in volunteering with action for development

Comhlámh has completely revamped its online presence integrating two existing websites into one unified site that has been met with critical acclaim. There have been over 60,000 unique visitors to the website while our following on Facebook has grown by 325% from 1,400 to over 5,000. We have re-developed the branding for our work on responsible volunteering with a suite of tools under the #VolOps branding. We have run numerous successful social media campaigns reaching hundreds of thousands of people. Our outreach work was externally evaluated in 2015 and it found that our resources were highly relevant and very well used by the sector.

New research was undertaken pointing to the changing modalities of volunteering for development calling for greater inclusivity of those excluded from volunteering and the need for reciprocity with North-South to be complemented by South-North and South-South volunteering to be facilitated. Combined with this we have published research on the economic value of volunteering and mapped the extent of volunteering from Ireland each year. We produced briefing papers and conducted workshops on online volunteering and the issues facing diaspora communities to engage in volunteering.

Outreach to wider networks has been built through the creation of a **Supporter Category of the Code of Good Practice**. Through this we will see various educational, professional, trade union and other bodies direct their memberships to the supports we have available and the work of those organisations in the Code of Good Practice.

COORDINATOR OF GOOD PRACTICE IN VOLUNTEERING

Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice for volunteer sending organisations is the recognised standard for international volunteering, it was critically acclaimed by the Guardian in 2016. The number of signatories continues to grow each year reaching 43 **Volunteer Sending Agencies (VSAs)** in 2016. The Code was reviewed and revised in 2015 through participatory processes that saw a deeper integration of development education running through the Code. Tiered levels of compliance have been introduced recognising deepening engagement with the Code through continuous improvements in practices.



LOOKING BACK ON OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2016



An extensive range of trainings and supports are provided to VSAs. Supports are also actively provided to new and emerging groups such as Peace Brigades International and many others who have commenced volunteering programmes. New partnerships with the health sector and third-level have enabled us to work on supporting the preparation and debriefing of medical electives in the Global South.

Our learning and practice in Ireland has been the subject of much international interest. We brought our experience to bear in shaping the certification process for the **European Union Aid Volunteers Initiative (EUAVI)** within which we are also working to support sending and host organisations achieve certification in the EUAVI. A version of the Code has been

prepared for sharing with civil society groups in North America. We have been active in many international networks including those focussed on child safeguarding in the context of international volunteering.

SUPPORTING CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN VOLUNTEERING AND ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Comhlámh has continued to build and innovate on the range of trainings, courses and supports it provides to Volunteer Sending Agencies and prospective and returned volunteers to consider critically their role in development work. **The Volunteer Charter** was revised and updated and is used by all VSAs in their work with volunteers. A range of training courses and manuals have been developed to support all stages of the life-cycle of engagement of volunteers and development workers. These include pre-decision courses, now online, pre-departure training, post return debriefing (including for critical incidents) along with the very popular **Coming Home Weekends**.

A range of other supports to support integration back into Ireland such as counselling referrals, career advice and social insurance and pension supports continue to be provided. Working through the VSA Volunteering and Development Education committee over a three year period a Volunteer Journal was developed, piloted and launched. This is supporting the learning of volunteers right through their journey from pre-departure through to coming home.

Public events such as the **First Wednesday** debates, speaking engagements with internationally renowned speakers have contributed to raising the level of criticality in the sector. Alongside long-established courses such as the **Skills in Development Education and Trade Justice**, new innovative training courses such as **'What Next'** and **'Be the Change'** have worked with returned volunteers to channel their new learning and questioning about the realities of global poverty and inequality.

Comhlámh has continued to build and innovate on the range of trainings, courses and supports it provides to Volunteer Sending Agencies (VSAs) and prospective and returned volunteers to consider critically their role in development work.

LOOKING BACK ON OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2016

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Comhlámh has successfully renewed its membership base and re-positioned itself as a hub of activity for returned development workers and volunteers to become and stay active on global justice issues. On top of this, our open-house approach has facilitated a vibrant community of over 70 organisations, campaigns and solidarity groups meeting in Comhlámh. Our membership base has grown by 57% while the value of membership subs has grown by 70%.

The role and place of membership groups needed to be clarified and in particular the balance between member or staff led initiatives and activities.

The period has been marked by the renewal of active membership groups in Comhlámh leading out on various solidarity, activist and educational activities. These include the **Trade Justice** group who have advocated with politicians and raised awareness on international trade deals that threaten state ability to shape public policies; the **Palestine & Israel Development Education** group running night courses on the conflict; the **Dympna Meaney Women's Leadership Fund** creating bursaries for women activists on gender based violence (GBV); **Ireland Says Welcome** advocating for asylum & migrant rights; **Focus Magazine group** who have revamped the publication and grown the circulation from 3,000 to 10,000; the **Belfast Group** who are active on resource extraction and the parallels between Latin America and Northern Ireland; the **Options and Issues group** who have contributed to the renewal of the Volunteer Charter and other training courses.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021

Comhlámh's strategic planning process commenced at the March 2016 board meeting. A discussion paper prepared by the Head and Chairperson was tabled and discussed at the board meeting. It laid out a frame from within which a rolling dialogue has been carried out across the association, including representatives of member groups, staff, board and wider membership. Comhlámh's solidarity partners have also been included in this conversation along with those Code Signatories who attended the 2016 AGM. This dialogue was facilitated by 'Partners-Training for Transformation' and drew its direction from the discussion paper.



The discussion paper highlighted the need for the new strategic plan to clearly articulate questions of values and identity as an association of members. The role and place of membership groups needed to be clarified and in particular the balance between member or staff led initiatives and activities. In this sense the strategic plan needed to catch up with developments that have been underway over the preceding number of years. The discussion paper also questioned how further depth could be brought to the two broad wings of our work; namely, the work as an agency supporting the work of **40+ Volunteer Sending Agencies** through the **Code of Good Practice** and the work of the association supporting activism through members' groups.

In terms of reflecting on our context, the discussion paper highlighted various policy domains that needed to be drawn from in planning forward our work. These included developments in the wider neo-liberal model of development, the role of the private sector, the status of volunteering and its place in the SDGs, developments on the place and role of civil society, the status of development education and wider public attitudes to aid and development. Various policy and research papers including our own work and that of partner organisations were to be used as reference points.



Four distinct moments were envisaged by the discussion paper, after which there was to be some reflection on how best to move forward. These moments were as follows:

- **An opening one day workshop with staff, board and representatives of member groups.**
- **A workshop with members, staff and board members on the night of the AGM. (Representatives of a number of Volunteer Agencies also attended as guests.)**
- **A half day workshop with Comhlámh's Solidarity Partners.**
- **A one day workshop for all members and staff.**

As no representatives attended these events from the Comhlámh Belfast group it was decided to hold a dedicated session with members in Belfast. This event was not initially planned so was facilitated by staff and not 'Partners'. There have therefore been 5 moments of this rolling dialogue.

The facilitation of each session was planned in detail by 'Partners – Training for Transformation' in consultation with the Head of Comhlámh and the chairperson in the case of the first of these sessions. Each workshop produced a rich vein of thought. As importantly, the conversations have also served to build cohesion and identity across the membership. What was remarkable was the level of synergies and congruence across the various workshops. There was little sense of any dissonance. There were questions raised concerning the identity and ownership of the association, there were also questions raised as to how to build momentum within membership and across groups.

Ultimately, the thrust of the strategic plan document will be to re-position the existing strategic plan into a fuller political context of the work undertaken on 'responsible volunteering'. It will aim to do this while situating this within the shift back to membership over the last 3 years as part of a wider positioning on the role of civil society, both locally and globally. It also will need to present a coherent narrative of the complexities of our communities that we work with.

Drawing from the rich veins of thinking, drafting work occurred through the autumn with versions worked on by the board, a board sub-group and a number of staff meetings. The document is seen as a living document that will guide our overall direction in the coming years. The board approved the plan at its December board meeting.

The document is seen as a living document that will guide our overall direction in the coming years.

LIST OF VOLUNTEER SENDING AGENCIES THAT ARE CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE SIGNATORIES

Core Indicator status is awarded to organisations that have demonstrated their programmes comply with the 18 identified most important “core indicators”.

Organisation Name	Attainment
Action Lesotho	Signatory
Agape Adventures	Signatory
AIESEC	Signatory
Chernobyl Children’s Project International	Signatory
Christina Noble Children’s Foundation	Signatory
Development Perspectives	Signatory
NUIG Draiocht	Signatory
EAPPI	Core Indicator
Edith Wilkins	Signatory
EIL Intercultural Learning	Comprehensive Compliance
Friends of Africa	Signatory
Brighter Communitites (Friends of Londiani Ireland)	Comprehensive Compliance
GIVE Ireland	Core Indicator
Global Schoolroom	Comprehensive Compliance
Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland	Signatory
Habitat for Humanity, Ireland	Comprehensive Compliance
Haven	Signatory
Hope Foundation	Comprehensive Compliance
Immunisation 4 Life	Signatory
Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation	Signatory
Irish Rule of Law International	Core Indicator
Lámha Suas	Signatory
Mellon Educate	Signatory
Missonaries of the Sacred Heart	Signatory
Music Harvest	Core Indicator
VSA NUIG	Signatory
Nurture Africa	Core Indicator
Operation Smile	Signatory
Pemba	Signatory
Salesians Ireland (SAVIO)	Signatory
Scouting Ireland	Signatory
SERVE	Comprehensive Compliance
Suas Educational Development	Comprehensive Compliance
Tearfund	Comprehensive Compliance
Umbrella Foundation	Comprehensive Compliance
University College Dublin Volunteers Overseas (UCDVO)	Comprehensive Compliance
Viatores Christi	Comprehensive Compliance
Vincentian Lay Missionaries (VLM)	Comprehensive Compliance
Voluntary Service International (VSI)	Signatory
Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)	Comprehensive Compliance
Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM)	Comprehensive Compliance
Zamda	Signatory

Comprehensive compliance status is awarded to organisations that have demonstrated that their programmes comply with at least 85% of all indicators including the core indicators.



TRADE JUSTICE GROUP

The Trade Justice group has been active through-out the year on TTIP and latterly on CETA. The group was active in the Europe day of Action in April and was part of organising a public demonstration with a march from the Central Bank to the EC offices. The group was active in following up with TDs and Senators and worked to highlight the vote in the Seanad on preventing the provisional application of CETA. The group revived the Trade Justice development education night course providing excellent facilitation and inputs on international trade and its impacts on development in the Global South and North.



FOCUS MAGAZINE GROUP

The group produced two issues of Focus including issue 100, quite a milestone for any publication. Focus tracked many of the themes resonating in the membership of the association. These ranged over questions of models of development, the place of ordinary people to effect change, economic justice and migrant solidarity. The crisis in the Mediterranean, the Irish housing crisis, the challenges facing Brazil's Indian communities, the 'undocumented' in Ireland, TTIP and CETA were all interwoven across the issues. It was also very positive to see the articles engaging with the ideas being debated at the #FirstWeds debates.

BELFAST GROUP

The Comhlámh group in Belfast had an eventful year; they launched their school resource on mining, which sought to engage critical reflection on care for the earth and its resources, while connecting the realities of mining in Peru with developments underway in Northern Ireland. The group held a number of meet-ups over the year including a public film night on Open Pit mining and a Christmas social evening.



COMHLÁMH MEMBER GROUPS

PALESTINE ISRAEL DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION GROUP

The group's focus has been on developing a Dev Ed programme that seeks to engage people with the conflict in the Middle East, allowing them to explore key areas around the conflict such as the history of the region, Gaza, Jerusalem, refugees and settlements. The course ran in the Spring time over 6 nights and was over-subscribed. Arising from the course, new members joined the group, a further public information night was held in December with a speaker from Trocaire and preparations were made to re-run the course in 2017.



DYMPNA MEANEY FUND GROUP

The fund raised €10,866 in 2016 and disbursed €13,157 to 5 women's rights activists and their organisations across Liberia, Kenya, Uganda and Nicaragua. The common thread across all their work was their commitment to work against Gender Based Violence. The group spoke at a side event at the SAFE Ireland international summit held in Dublin with a view to build support and profile for their work.

IRELAND SAYS WELCOME

This group of members drawn from a community of humanitarian aid workers and others merged into Comhlámh as a member group in 2016. Its focus is on raising awareness of the realities faced by those seeking refuge in Ireland. The group has supported campaigns that seek to call attention to the poor conditions and treatment of people living within the Direct Provision system and supported RAMSI (Refugee and Migrant Solidarity Ireland) with its #4000promises postcard campaign, advocating for the Irish Government to uphold its promise to welcome 4,000 refugees fleeing war and persecution to Ireland. The group was also active on Culture Night hosting MASI (Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland)



CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE VOLUNTEER SENDING AGENCIES - WORKING GROUPS

VOLUNTEERING AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee are a group of signatories who are working to strengthen and embed development education within the wider volunteering network. The committee meets 3 times a year to debate explore and act on dev ed initiatives together. In 2016, the committee has undertaken: the development and roll out of a Learning Journal for the sector, 'Swap til you Drop' fundraising/ awareness raising events and delivery of dev ed sessions at the Code of Good Practice Peer Support meetings. Members of the group included: Caroline O'Connor and Joanne Mulligan (UCDVO), Kevin Murphy (Nurture Africa), Siobhán Hughes (SERVE), Rose Hennessey (Brighter Communities Worldwide), Evelyn Power and Aine Ni Ealai (EIL - Global Citizen Award), Alex Brock (SUAS Educational Development), Volunteer Engagement Officer (Comhlámh)



VOLUNTEERING OPTIONS WORKING GROUP



The group provides oversight and guidance around the development of the **Code of Good Practice** for Volunteer Sending Agencies. In 2016 the group conducted work around the development of a new network of organisations who would act as 'Supporters' of the Code. The group also oversaw discussions around developing policy related to organisations work on volunteering in orphanages. Members of the group included: Hester Jackman (VSO), Agnes Makuru Kipalo (former volunteer UCDVO), Bianca van Bavel (former volunteer/Irish Forum for Global Health Student Outreach Group), Stephen Cassidy (SUAS), Kate O'Donnell (returned volunteer), Duane Holden (Dinit), Louise Talbot Beirne (VMM), Anton Kieffer (EIL), the Volunteering Quality Officer, Programme Manager and Head of Comhlámh.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ROLES SINCE THE 2016 AGM WERE AS FOLLOWS:

DIRECTORS

Katherine Meenan
Ellen Donnelly
Jim Egan
Arthur Gaffney
Robin Hanan
Lebam Macauw
Ellen Regan
Kathleen Cass
Chris O'Donoghue
Bianca van Bavel

Chairperson & Dympna Meaney Fund liaison
Deputy Chairperson
Treasurer & Risk Officer
Staff Liaison Officer



STAFF THROUGH 2016

Mark Cumming
Dervla King
Elena Garcia
Susan Collins
Alan Hayes
Sive Bresnihan
Ruth Powell
Grainne O'Neill
Gareth Conlon
James Redmond
Mark Malone
Philip Mudge
Nina Sachau
Aine Lynch
Eduard Obuf
Silvana Socci
Ciaran Gilmore
Kate O'Donnell
Charlotte Toner
Lacey Reade
David McGovern
Austin Hall

Head of Comhlámh (4.5 days)
Programme Manager (4 days)
Finance and Admin Manager (4 days)
Organisation and Programme Support Administrator (3 days)
Training and Education Officer (4 days, resigned October)
Training and Education Officer (4 days, commenced November)
Information and Support Officer (4 days)
Volunteer Engagement Officer (4 days)
Volunteer Engagement Officer (4 days – maternity cover)
Communications Officer (4 days, resigned January)
Communications Officer (4 days, commenced February)
Volunteering Quality Officer (4 days, resigned November)
Volunteering Quality Officer (4 days, commenced November)
Volunteering in Humanitarian Aid Officer (4 days, commenced January)
Receptionist (CCVG) (2.5 days, resigned April)
Receptionist (CCVG) (2.5 days, commenced January, resigned December)
Receptionist (CCVG) (2.5 days, commenced June)
EU Aid volunteer Initiative - Civic Service Intern (ended August)
EU Aid Volunteer Initiative – Civic Service Intern (commenced August)
Student placement, Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University
Student placement, Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University
Intern (USA)

ACCOUNTS

The Directors' report and the Independent Auditor's report are produced in a report submitted to the Companies Registration Office, this is available online at www.comhlamh.org/annual-reports/

Comhlámh would like to acknowledge the support it has received from various parties who have supported and engaged with our work on a voluntary basis

Thanks to the following returned volunteers who spoke of their experiences at the Irish Aid Volunteer Fair – Agnes Kipalo, Michelle Hesso, Alex Dunne and Marie Moreau. Thanks to those Comhlámh members who helped out on the day also, Ellen Donnelly, Kathleen Cass, Arthur Gaffney, Lebam Macaw and Ellen Regan. We also are grateful for the session run by Sarah Bird on wellness and self-care at the event.

Patty Abozaglo for organising a series of evening sessions with Capacitar practices for self-care for volunteers, development workers and activists.

Thanks to the following who contributed their knowledge and insights to the Trade group's evening course on Trade Justice, Conall O'Caomh, Michael O'Brien, John Reynolds, Mark Boyle and Simon Murtagh. Thanks to Yaser Alashqar and Eoin Hamill for their inputs to the evening course organised by the Palestine Israel Dev Ed group.

A special word of thanks is due to all those who took part in our #FirstWeds series of debates over the course of the year. These included:



“TTIP – Corporate Charter or Jobs Booster?”

Dan O'Brien, Chief Economist of the Institute of International and European Affairs, Barry Finnegan, Programme Director and Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Journalism & Media Communications in Griffith College, Mark O'Mahoney, Director of Policy and Communications at Chambers Ireland. Deaglán de Bréadún former journalist of the Irish Times was the moderator.

“Food and the Future of Food.”

Ross Golden-Bannon, Editor Food and Wine magazine. Rose Hogan, sustainable agriculture advisor Trocaire, Norman Rides, manager of the Dublin Food Co-op and a special guest from Honduras, Jose Omar Rodriguez a Honduran fair Trade coffee producer. Aoife Carrigy, Chairperson of the Irish Food Writers' Guild was the moderator on the night.

“Fool's Gold, is Ireland a tax haven?”

Frank Barry, Professor of International Business and Economic Development at Trinity College Dublin, Aisling Donohue, independent tax specialist, Sorley McCaughey, Christian Aid's policy and advocacy manager, Aubrey Robinson, news producer and journalist with UTV Ireland.



Is Ireland a tax
is ireland a tax **haven**
is ireland a tax **free haven**
is ireland tax **free**

THANKS

“Migrant Solidarity – what does it look like?”

Neltah Chadamoyo, Public Engagement Officer for the Africa Centre. Lucky Khambule, Movement of Asylum Seekers Ireland. Razieh Nikoomanesh, Migrants Rights Center. Caoimhe Butterly, activist returned from working in Greece, Balkans and Calais. The moderator was Dr Gavan Titley of Maynooth University.



“Solidarity or Charity – What direction for international volunteering?”

Eilish Dillon, MA programme coordinator of Kimmage DSC. Kate O'Donnell, interim Executive Director for Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Ireland. Clare Holdsworth, professor of Social Geography at Keele University. Shane Halpin, CEO of Viatores Christi. The moderator on the night was Robin Hanan, Director of European Anti Poverty Network.



“Responses to Gender Based Violence.”

Breda Gahan, Team lead on Health and HIV at Concern Worldwide. Ruth O'Dea, Training manager at Women's Aid. Tessa Collins, Community development worker at Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre. Alan O'Neill, CEO of Men's Development Network (MDN). Our moderator on the night was Carol Ballantine, PhD researcher at the School of Global Women's Studies in NUI Galway.

A **special thank** you to all those who have worked with us as course facilitators over the year in providing pre-departure and post assignment training and debriefing and expert facilitation inputs on the courses and workshops including: Pre-departure training, skills in Development Education, Be the Change and Coming Home weekend. A range of other capacity building courses supported by Irish Aid as well as the Training Links programme of the Wheel were held which included Debriefing, Advanced Debriefing, Fundraising, Advanced Social Media, Creativity and Change, Using the arts for social transformation and Supporting LBGQT Volunteers.

- Nina Sachau, Catarina Ferreira, Siobhan Clancy, Frank Naughton, Helen Lowry, Lizzie Downes, Morina O'Neill, Deirdre Kettlewell, Orla Quinn, Ana Barbu, Ciara O'Halloran, Deirdre Quinlan, Ellen Regan, Eugene Smith, Geraldine Quinlan, Janet Horner, Marie Therese Fanning. Carmel Mulrine, Michelle Hennessy, Andrew Byrne, Iseult Ring-O'Connor, Sarah Burke, Agnes Kipalo, Kate O'Donnell, Stuart Garrett, Kevin Murphy, Claire Glavey, Carol McGuinness, Gert Ackerman, Simon Scriver, Debbie Lovelle Hawker, Patty Abozaglo and Nora Furlong.

Thanks to Sandra Velthuis and Johnny O'Regan for the audit work they conduct with the Volunteer Sending Agencies as part of the certification process for the Code of Good Practice and to Derek O'Reilly who alongside Sandra and Johnny undertake the work of the Code Recognition panel, awarding Core or Comprehensive compliance status to Code Signatories.

Thanks also to 'Partners – Training for Transformation' for their expert facilitation through our strategic planning process and to Carol Murari for her wonderful photographs taken at the Irish Aid Fair.

Thanks to those who have taken out advertising space in Focus, without which Focus could not be printed and distributed: Kimmage Development Studies Centre, Dublin City University - School of Law and Governance and the Irish Fair Trade Network.

We would like to salute our partners in the TTIP Information Network with whom we have collaborated most effectively over the last year on TTIP and CETA. The Peoples Movement, ATTAC Ireland, An Taisce, Environmental Pillar, Crumlin Says No to Water Meters and Charges, Young Friends of the Earth & Trócaire. The work will continue in particular in relation to CETA.



We would like to thank our **Erasmus+** partners, finep - Germany, Inex-SDA – Czech Republic and Volunteering Matters – UK, with whom we have produced research on active citizenship, training manuals and run a Europe wide ‘What Next’ course for returned volunteers. Our engagement with these partners will continue into the next few years as we will develop further training manuals, national courses, an online course, pan-European ‘training of trainers’ and a final conference to share the learning and results of this collaboration.

EU Aid Volunteers We Care, We Act

We would like to acknowledge our programme partnerships with France Volontaires and La Guilde du Raid as part of the EU Aid Volunteering Initiative technical assistance and capacity building programmes. As part of these programmes we are delighted to have the opportunity to engage with Action Aid - Bangladesh, Red Cross - Philippines, Burundi and Burkina Faso, Caritas - Ecuador, Humanitarian Logistics Association – UK, ESI LABS – Latvia; HVSF – Hungary, Zavod Volontariat – Slovenia; Action Aid Hellas – Greece; PVCC – Cyprus, FOCSIV – Italy. Our engagement will deepen in 2017 with the development of resource manuals on getting certified for the EU Aid Volunteer Initiative and the hosting of volunteers.



2016 IN NUMBERS

50467
Website users
an increase of
13% in 2016



5230
Facebook
likes



4,941
Minutes spent
watching our
videos



75% were new visitors



1500 People
reached through
information events
and presentation



4,617 Twitter
followers



2095
People
used our
Parliament st.
building



1500 people
reached through
information
events & presentation



48 Blog
Posts



8 Conference
presentations
across Asia and
Europe



2 FOCUS
magazine
published



650 Participants in
our pre-departure and
coming home training



8 Capacity building
courses ran for a range
of sending agencies



238
Workshops, trainings,
meetings held by 60
groups using our office



80 Medical students
supported for their
global south
electives



40% increase
in individual
request for info
on internat.
volunteering



8 Short
videos made
documenting
and promoting
our work



6 very busy
active
Members
Group

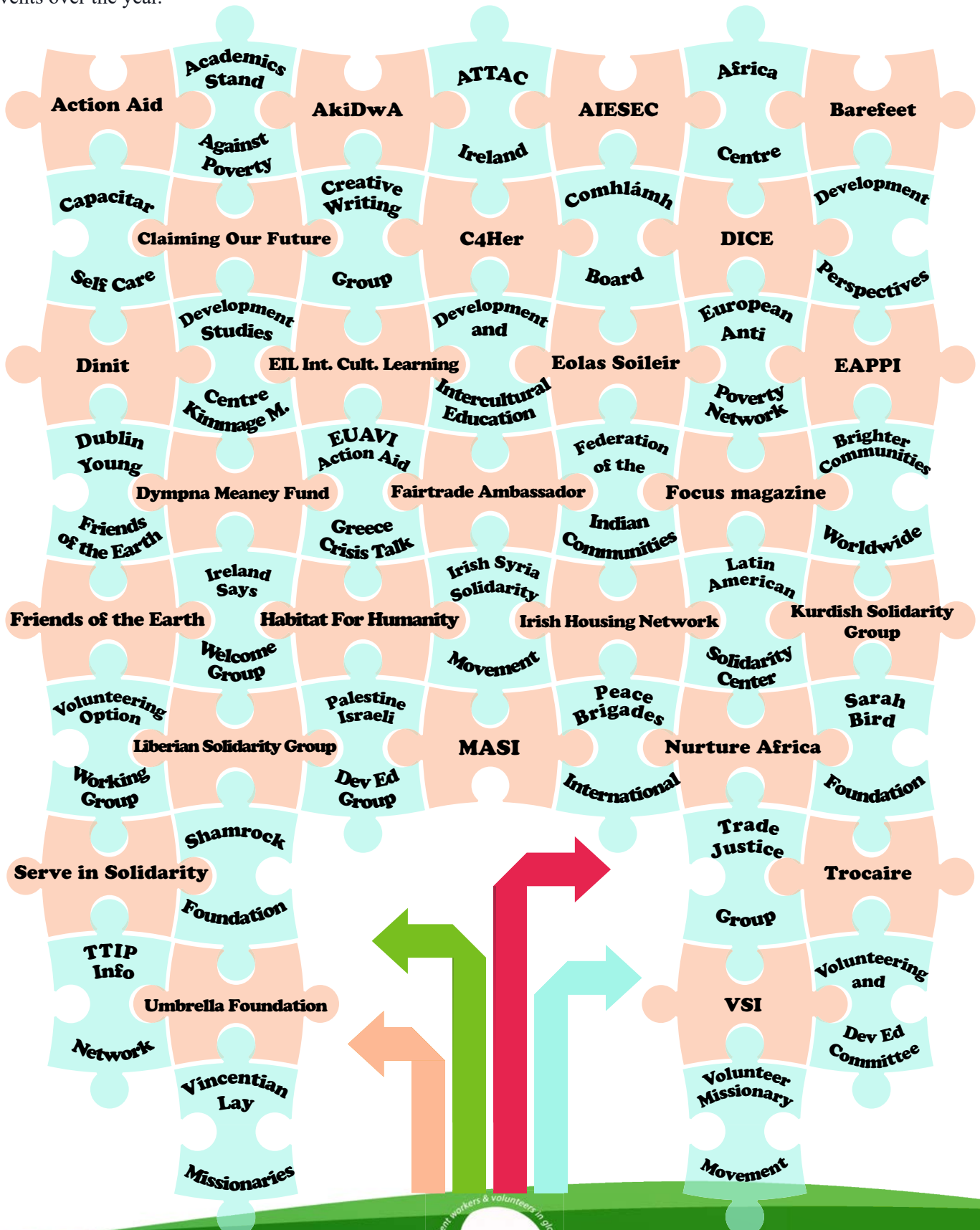


90% participants
happy with training
provided by us



GROUPS THAT MET IN COMHLÁMH

As part of our support for supporting pathways for returned volunteers to become active in development issues when they come home, we provide a meeting space for groups active in global solidarity to meet and host a wide range of events over the year.



ORGANISATIONS USING COMHLÁMH AS THEIR POSTAL ADDRESS

The following groups used Comhlámh as their postal address:

- *Peace Brigades International*
- *Anti-Racism Network*
- *Shamrock Foundation*
- *Afghan Cultural Society*
- *Stride Ethiopia*
- *Attac Ireland*
- *Irish Feminist Network*
- *Dinit*
- *Access to Medicines Ireland*





Front Cover:
Minister Joe McHugh at the Irish Aid Fair with staff and members of Comhlámh

Back Cover:
IMU returned missionaries and UCDVO volunteers participate in skills sharing workshops