

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Tearfund's global volunteering initiative encourages active citizenship both locally and globally, equipping and empowering young people for future opportunities and supporting them to become agents of change, campaigning on issues faced by those in the world's poorest communities. In 2014–15, we sent out 363 individuals through our volunteering programmes.

Overall, our global volunteering programmes aim to:

- **Challenge** negative preconceptions about less developed communities and deepen understanding of international development

- **Activate** and inspire people to live out lifestyles of justice, increasing active citizenship both locally and globally
- **Support** and extend the long-term, sustainable development work of our partners
- **Envision** the church by providing campaigning support and introducing people to Tearfund
- **Develop** and equip individuals, helping them to broaden their outlook, equipping and empowering them for future opportunities.

Tearfund also runs the DFID-funded International Citizen Service (ICS) programme which gives anyone aged between 18 and 25 the opportunity to spend ten weeks volunteering in Bangladesh, Bolivia or South Africa. Through this programme, volunteers from the UK live and work alongside young people in-country and contribute to development projects. They are supported to fully integrate with the community, which deepens their understanding of development issues.

The ICS programme only sends volunteers to organisations and projects who have specifically requested help, and ensures that volunteers can use their unique skills to have a direct impact on reducing poverty. In 2014–15, we sent a total of 482 volunteers to projects through ICS (45 per cent of whom were in-country volunteers).



Photo: Amanda Taylor/Tearfund (Burundi)

What change have we seen?

The establishment of ICS Alumni groups in South Africa and Bolivia

In March, more than 50 Bolivian young adults met for Bolivia's inaugural ICS Alumni group and established a youth board. The purpose of this self-supporting group is for members to encourage and support each other as they engage in Bolivian development issues together and individually. It is an opportunity to share fundraising ideas for projects they have planned themselves in their own home communities. The group established links with local politicians in the lead-up to local elections in 2015. Tearfund plans to start ICS Alumni groups in Bangladesh and the UK in 2015.



Photo: Hannah Maule-finch/Tearfund (Jordan)

Developing volunteers after their overseas experience

Tearfund held a debriefing event at a summer student conference in 2014 which focused on developing volunteers once they have arrived home from their overseas experience. Many of the young people were engaging with *Rhythms*¹¹ (a dynamic Tearfund online community that inspires others to live differently through articles and videos) as well as starting their own initiatives to draw support and raise awareness for the various partners they had been working with overseas. This links to Tearfund's global approach to engage more supporters and campaigners to live differently and reduce their own carbon footprint,



Photo: Steve Adams/Tearfund (Nepal)

which in turn will reduce the burden on people living in the world's poorest communities.

Looking forward

■ **ICS, so what?**

In the next phase of ICS, there will be a stronger focus on the question: 'ICS, so what?' Going forward we will have a stronger focus on encouraging and supporting ongoing action after volunteers have completed their ICS placements. For all volunteers, who are a significant part of their country's demographic, it is an opportunity to have a voice, to influence local policy and to take a lead, some for the first time.

■ **Focus on learning**

The focus on learning has led to the development of a 'theory of change' for volunteers across all our programmes. This has been broken down into smaller steps and mapped on our volunteer learning journey. This will impact not only the resources and training people receive but also how we engage with volunteers at different points on their journey. It will also increase the long-term impact of their time overseas, including ongoing engagement with Tearfund and lifestyle choices. (You can read more about how Tearfund is engaging supporters in this way in the **Change through collective action** section, page 50.)



Hope restored for ICS volunteer in South Africa

Mondli is a young person from Durban who participated in the DFID ICS programme in 2014 along with a group of young people from the UK. Before the programme, Mondli said he wasn't aware of how people in other communities were living. Through his experience with ICS, he has learnt about local and global issues that people are facing which has encouraged and inspired him to be more involved in helping others.

After ten weeks on the ICS placement, living with international volunteers and working on a variety of projects, Mondli has learnt how to work cross-culturally, the different techniques needed to manage projects and the reality that he is capable of starting something new.

Since his placement, Mondli has been inspired to use his artistic gifts to work with disabled children in Durban, teaching them sewing skills. Mondli has also opened up his own bag-making business. He explains:

'My hopes and visions for my country are to see more youth participation in communities focusing on early childhood development.'

¹¹ <http://rhythms.org>