



Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme Guidelines

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Acknowledgment

These updated guidelines are a result of a 2008 project initiated by the Directors; Life and Mission Teams- Formation & Ministries, Christian Brothers, Oceania Province.

The Project Officer, Martin Kelly, was informed by his three and a half years (2002-05) experience with the Scheme as the Volunteer Coordinator for the former St Francis Xavier Province (SFXP). He acknowledges his debt to the work that had been done from 2000-2007 by the Australian and New Zealand Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme (ANZERVS) National Coordinating Group Committee and the St Francis Xavier Province (SFXP) team that developed its Ministry Worker Programme.

In regards to this work acknowledgement is owed also to the Indigenous communities of Australia, the National Coordinating Group- Indigenous Ministries and, from a St Francis Xavier Province perspective, its Indigenous advisor, Ms Kerry Charlton. It is from the painful failures and successes of the Christian Brothers' work with Indigenous communities and the patient, consistent and firm advice given to them by their Indigenous advisors and the communities with which they worked that significant aspects of the core policies and operating procedures of the ANZERV Scheme and the SFXP Ministry Worker Programme evolved.

These guidelines have been developed on the Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme's eight years of operating experience and the two policy & procedure documents that informed that experience; *the ANZERVS Policy and the former St Francis Xavier Provinces Ministry Worker Programme Guidelines*

Rationale

Who Are Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme Volunteers?

Edmund Rice Volunteers are, by definition, volunteers who have been recruited, prepared and supported during and after their placement period by an Oceania Province recognised scheme, currently called the Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme (ERVS). They are generally volunteering with Edmund Rice ministries or with associated programmes in partnership with the Edmund Rice Network or Oceania Province.

Origin

Volunteers have been a part of Edmund Rice ministries for many years. The Edmund Rice Volunteer scheme was established in 2001 in Australia and New Zealand and 74 volunteers would have been placed and supported by the end of 2008.

The establishment of an Edmund Rice Volunteers Scheme was a practical means of embracing the Four Directions set out in the 1996 General Chapter of the Christian Brothers :

- Internationality
- Call to people at the margins of society
- Growth through our fragility
- The Edmund Rice Network

In the document *New Beginnings with Edmund*, under the heading of *Internationality*, the following strategy is suggested:

We will encourage Provinces and regions to use the research and experience of global networks for social justice as they work within their local contexts.

Under the heading, *Call to People at the Margins of Society*, it is suggested that:

We will maintain a global perspective in redistributing our human and material resources, committing a percentage of our substance as well as our surplus to the marginalised.

and finally:

We will establish an international volunteer system to provide opportunities for inter-province and inter-cultural experience, and to promote internationality.

A Justice Response

Through volunteering within the ERV Scheme it is explicit that the volunteer is participating in the justice and development work of the Edmund Rice Network, Oceania Province, and the Congregation of the Christian Brothers within the Catholic Church.

The underlying spirit of the Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme is one of always being a guest within the wider local community with whom the volunteer is living and working, and from whom the volunteer is learning

The Aims of the Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme

The scheme exists:

1. To support ministries in their justice and development work towards the building of a more just, sustainable and compassionate world where all enjoy dignity, equality and freedom.
2. To allow people the opportunity to work and build relationships with people who experience marginalisation.
3. To be a means of promoting the holistic growth of a person, particularly in regard to justice spirituality.
4. To provide a comprehensive framework and a set of guidelines and procedures to attract, prepare and support volunteers working in ministry alongside people on the margins of dominant society.
5. To minimise the potential for harm to the local community, the volunteer and the ministry that may arise from a poorly prepared volunteer experience.
6. To ensure that appropriate protocols are followed for working with Oceania Indigenous communities and majority-world local communities with whom Edmund Rice Ministries and associated programmes work.
7. To animate the Edmund Rice Network's capacity to be a network of people with *hearts open to the cry of the earth and the poor and who are moved to prophetic action through advocacy and works for justice.* (2008 Munnar Congregational Chapter)

The recruitment, preparation and ongoing support of volunteers through the Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme reflect the above aims.

Edmund Rice Spirituality

Edmund Rice was open to the presence of God in his life by embracing the gospel of Christ as he opened his heart to the spirit of God present to him in the poor of Ireland, especially the young.

People inspired by Edmund's charism today, are also people who are energised by the gospel of Jesus to be with the poor and marginalised of our world and to be agents of change for the liberation of people from oppression and poverty.

In responding to the 'signs of the times', the Christian Brothers of Oceania Province challenge Edmund Rice volunteers to listen to the voice of the poor, and to respond by 'being witness to' and 'standing with' the most vulnerable in our world today. In recent years, the Christian Brothers have become increasingly and painfully aware of their own brokenness and their limitations in their previous approaches and ways of responding to the needs of people. There has been a greater awareness about their white European cultural paradigms and their missionary dominated approach. This has led to a humble search for more respectful and sensitive ways of working with other peoples within their cultures. Greater emphasis has been placed on openness, encouraging relationship, connectedness and inclusivity

Characteristics of an Edmund Rice Volunteer

A person who wishes to be an Edmund Rice volunteer would normally have an association with the Christian Brothers and/or Edmund Rice Network, often by being part of an initiative that is inspired by the charism of Edmund Rice and supported by the Oceania Leadership Team or Edmund Rice Education Australia.

It would be expected that a volunteer would usually be someone who has:

- A passion for justice.
- A commitment to personal and spiritual development.
- Had an appropriate experience of personal and communal prayer.
- Good health.
- Indications of maturity - good communication skills, a strong sense of self and self-understanding, especially one's own weaknesses and the need for self-care.
- Openness to cultural adaptation - i.e. humble, flexible, accepting.
- An attraction to the Edmund Rice story and an understanding of its implications for ministry.
- An understanding that participation in an Edmund Rice Ministry involves sharing in personal reflections of spirituality.
- A desire to live simply, with a willingness to enter the sacred space of another culture as a guest and to live simply amongst the people.
- A willingness to be associated with an Edmund Rice Community.
- An understanding that participation in an Edmund Rice ministry involves sharing in the mission of the church.
- An understanding that ministry is a shared journey with members of the local community, where both giving and receiving relationships develop.
- A willingness and an ability to reflect upon, share and discuss their experience as an Edmund Rice volunteer, including gaining a greater understanding of the complex issues relating to decolonisation and development work in a cross cultural context.
- The support of a network of relationships within their own life and a willingness to deepen and extend those relationships through participation in the volunteer experience.
- A preparedness to form and maintain relationships with the local community and ministry beyond the time of their volunteer placement.
- A willingness for ongoing involvement in the Edmund Rice Network, Church, community work, or justice & peace activity on return from their volunteer placement.

All Edmund Rice Volunteers come with the great gifts and offerings of a generous and open heart, significant experience and skill-sets. The greatest attribute that they can bring towards standing in solidarity with people experiencing marginalisation and supporting the work of their

ministry is that of being a person on a humble journey willing to explore further what it means to be in relationship with another.

Every attempt will be made to provide for the volunteers' holistic wellbeing. However, in choosing to become an Edmund Rice volunteers, people make a choice to live with less (money, power, possessions, etc). They will enter into many difficulties, frustrations and hardships through attempting to live more in the reality of the people that they are with.

Characteristics of the Receiving Ministry or Programme

It is expected that receiving ministries would:

- Enjoy a relationship grounded in mutuality with the local community that is demonstrated through the existence of a relationship structure for ongoing guidance in working appropriately with the local community. Eg, a local mentor or advisory/reference group.
- Have a clear understanding and vision for their ministry in collaboration with the local community and other stakeholders.
- Have a commitment to the ongoing capacity building and development of the local people for the ministry's roles.
- Have appropriate accountability, support and organisational structures in place.
- Have a specific role for the volunteer.
- Have clear written operating principles and procedures outlining the expectations of their volunteers' contribution to the ministry.

The ministry or programme would ensure the following;

- Consultation with the local community in regards to the placements of its volunteers.
- A programme of induction into the volunteers' roles and the ministry's mission, goals, policies and procedures, including clear accountability and reporting lines of communication for each volunteer.
- Preparation of a crisis management /evacuation plan for volunteers.
- That volunteers are linked to the ministry's local community's relationship structure for ongoing guidance in working appropriately with the local community. This could take the form of structured regular meetings with the ministry's local community mentor or a representative of its local community advisory group.
- The setting up of language learning processes as determined through dialogue with representatives of the local community.
- A reflection programme that is structured within each volunteer's role timetable.
- Accompaniment or spiritual direction made available to the volunteer.
- Professional external supervision, if appropriate to the volunteers' roles.
- Organisation of a periodic review for the volunteers based on their role description.
- An appropriate departure ritual/celebration.

Characteristics of the Receiving Ministry Community

One significant characteristic of the Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme is the experience of living as a member of a reflective community in the Edmund Rice tradition. Where this is not practically possible volunteers are linked through meetings, prayer, liturgy, reflections and shared meals to the Christian Brother community that is associated with the ministry.

It is expected that receiving ministry communities would:

- Enjoy healthy relationship with the local community.
- Be committed to supporting the self-determination of the local community.
- Demonstrate healthy community lifestyles with commitment to reflection on action as the core of community and ministry.
- Strive to live simply and maintain a lifestyle appropriate to that of the local community.
- Be composed of members willing to share their lives openly with each other and with prospective community members.
- Have clearly articulated models of leadership.

The ministry community to which volunteers belong during placement would ensure the following;

- A ritual welcome into the ministry community which includes a sharing of hopes/expectations.
- Inclusion of volunteers in the regular life of the ministry community including meetings, appropriate community duties, reflections and celebrations.
- An invitation to volunteers to join the ministry community in their prayer life.
- Assist with each volunteer's final evaluation in relation to community living.
- A fitting departure ritual/celebration.

Styles of Edmund Rice Volunteering

Long-Term Skill & Relationship Focus

The core of an Edmund Rice Ministry's development work is relationship. To be able to work effectively, in a cross-cultural context, with the local people with whom the ministry is working alongside, long term relationships are necessary to ensure that the work being done is in accordance with their needs and that it is done in the spirit of always being a "guest". Generally, therefore, the Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme has a preference for placing volunteers for periods of at least one year.

The value and effectiveness of the volunteer's work is generally proportional to the depth of relationships they have formed with those with whom they are working, and relationships that are beyond the superficial require time to be built on a significant platform of cultural awareness and accommodation, a willingness to begin to appreciate the world from the lens of an- other and with a healthy dose of humility.

Short-Term Specialised / Expert Focus

While long term placements (a year or more) are the preferred option, there are many valid exceptions to this generalised preference. Each ministry can recruit and place volunteers according to the preferences of the volunteer and the needs of the ministry. The general preferred period for a short-term volunteer with the Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme is 3 - 11 months.

However volunteers have been placed for 1-2 month periods in circumstances where it meets the availability of the volunteer and the need of the ministry to have someone come and offer a specific skill or expertise for a shorter period of time. Sometimes these are situations or opportunities where the service provided by the volunteer is a high priority for the ministry. There is recognition that such short term placements limit the opportunity to build relationships with those being served.

Support

Edmund Rice Volunteers are supported during their placement with an in-country programme of mentoring, spiritual accompaniment and supervision combined with regular support from the Province. On return volunteers are debriefed and supported with their re-entry towards integrating their volunteer experience into the next phase of their lives.

Volunteer Recruitment, Selection and Preparation Stage

Principles

- a. *Acknowledging the Inherent Exploitative Nature of Volunteering in a Cross Cultural, Minority-Majority World Context*

The Scheme acknowledges that while volunteering has great potential for the volunteers' personal and spiritual growth it also has the potential to be an exploitative activity, albeit unintentionally. The potential for exploitation lies in the context that generally volunteers gain more than they contribute and that there is often an unavoidable imbalance between volunteers and the people they work with, in terms of power, status and access to resources.

The Scheme holds that, if this potential can be accepted as a dynamic that exists in crossing from the minority to the majority world context, its effects can be minimised with humility and comprehensive volunteer preparation. Similarly the ministries placing volunteers will need comprehensive operating procedures and a commitment towards the ongoing monitoring of their own procedures for maintaining their "guest" relationship with those whom they work with.

- b. *Local Community First*

Each ministry determines its volunteer programme in consultation with its local community. Where appropriate there is an attempt to first fill positions with local people.

- c. *The Balance of Volunteers Gaining Personal & Spiritual Growth and the Doing of Ministry Work*

The ERVS exists to serve the two equal goals of supporting ministries in their work and providing the opportunity for volunteers to grow in their capacity and passion for justice spirituality. For these goals to be met, the ERV Scheme and Ministries will need to have transparent expectations, guidelines, and procedures.

d. Role Description & Accountability

Volunteers can expect to be given a role description prepared by the ministry that matches their experience, skills and relevant qualifications. They can also expect to be given appropriate support, in terms of induction, guidance, supervision and resources, to fulfil the role. In turn volunteers are expected to be accountable to the Ministry Leader to perform their role within the bounds of the ministry's operational procedures.

e. The Volunteer Experience as a Strategic Formation Tool

Province Regional Formation & Network Coordinators, Ministry Leaders and School Leaders are encouraged to strategically use the Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme as one of the suite of individual formation and ministry renewal programmes offered across the Province.

Any individual may apply to be a volunteer provided they meet the characteristics of an Edmund Rice volunteer.

Preference will be given to applicants who have been recommended as a part of an ER Network, ministry or EREA formation plan.

f. 3-6 Month Application Process

Oceania Province is not interested in offering an exotic travel or "poverty tourism" service through its Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme. It acknowledges that providing the opportunity to work and build relationships with people who experience marginalisation is sacred work.

This is work to be entered into with humility and it needs invitation from the people who are sought to be in relationship with. It needs considerable discernment and preparation on the part of the ministry, the potential volunteers and from those who will be supporting them.

The spirit of the preparation is that it is a journey of reflection and discernment supported by an individual or group- workshopped, adult education process.

As a general rule the minimum preparation time for the application process is 3 months, although at least 6 months is considered preferable.

g. Embedding the Preparation Process within the Volunteer's Local ER Network

Where possible, preparing volunteers in a group and combining the course- work of the preparation programme within a series of justice spirituality workshops offered to the ER Network and others is encouraged. Apart from contributing to animating the ER Network, this helps to embed volunteers within the community that sends them out to the ministries and to which they will return to. It is hoped that this not only widens the support base of the volunteers, but it also increases opportunities for the sending community to celebrate and call forth the anticipated gifts of renewed capacity and passion for justice spirituality returned volunteers bring from their experience.

ERVS Coordination

- a. The ERV Scheme is coordinated by a Province Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme Coordinator (PERVSC) who supports the work of Regional Formation Coordinators and Ministry Leaders.

Apart from supporting the mission of the Province's ministries the Scheme's value lies in its ability to be a tool for Regional Formation Coordinators to use and its ability to animate the local ER Network, therefore its management focus should be local.

The role of a Province Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme Coordinator would be to;

- i. Monitor the ER Volunteer Scheme across the Province.
 - ii. Support Regional Formation Coordinators promote ER Volunteering as a formation opportunity.
 - iii. Support Regional Formation Coordinators prepare and support volunteers before, during and after placement.
 - iv. Support Ministry Leaders manage their volunteer programme.
 - v. Be responsible for promoting the Scheme at the Province and International level.
 - vi. Negotiate with Ministry Leaders and the Director, Life & Mission Team – Ministries future potential opportunities for where volunteers could support ministry work.
 - vii. Coordinate across the Province the negotiation on volunteer placement availability with all of the Ministry Leaders.
 - viii. Recommend volunteers to Ministry Leaders for placement based on the advice received from Regional Formation Coordinators as their volunteer applicants progress through the preparation process.
 - ix. Negotiate with Ministry Leaders any issues that arise with all volunteers in placement, in relation to policy and procedures concerned with their management and support.
 - x. Review annually with each Ministry Leader the operation of the volunteer scheme as it relates to their ministry.
 - xi. Convene an annual meeting of Formation Coordinators to review and plan the operation of the volunteer scheme.
- b. The Regional Formation Coordinators coordinate the preparation process for volunteers within their regions

Preparation

Minimum Preparation for all Province Ministry Staff including Christian Brothers and Volunteers

It is expected that all who engage in work, paid or volunteer, on behalf of the Province at a ministry require a minimum of preparation, i.e.;

- Induction into the ministry's mission, ethos and operational procedures.
- Child Care, Safety and Protection Training. (If children are a component of the ministry's work).

Personnel working with a ministry in a cross-cultural context will also need preparation towards an understanding of the fact that their work is, as "a guest", at the invitation of the local community, after consultation with the ministry. They will also require initial generic and site – specific cross cultural training which will be followed up on an ongoing basis during their period of work.

Reasons for Increased Level of Preparation for Edmund Rice Volunteers

For its volunteers the Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme's formation process increases the minimum level of preparation required for Province staff to include community and international development principles, a process of refining their personal justice spirituality framework, reflective practice, community living and attaining an understanding of the Christian Brothers' justice spirituality framework within the Catholic Church.

Why do we do this?

- i. To support the ministry in doing the best justice and development work it can.
- ii. To support volunteers do the best justice and development work they can in the generally limited timeframe they have available.
- iii. To increase the probability that their justice and development activity will be experienced positively by those with whom they work, i.e. To minimize the risk that their work will inadvertently contribute to disconnection rather than relationship- building, despite their well meaning intentions.
- iv. To minimise the potential for physical or emotional harm to themselves.
- v. To minimise the potential for harm to their ministry's reputation and ability to conduct its work.
- vi. To increase the probability that the volunteer experience will be a positive and energising one that the volunteers can take with them into their future lives as they continue to work towards prophetic action through advocacy and works for justice within the Edmund Rice Network, the Catholic Church or with other community organisations.

Preparation Procedures

- a. The Regional Formation Coordinators (RFCs) coordinate the preparation process for volunteers within their regions.
- b. Volunteers commence the volunteer programme when they submit an application form to their RFC.
- c. All applicants must have a current a *Working With Children Check*, valid for their own region. The applicant is responsible for any expense incurred with this process.
- d. On receipt of an expression of interest to volunteer the RFC will send the applicant an information pack consisting of a summary of the ERV Scheme, an Application Form and an Application Privacy Policy Statement.
- e. Copies of all applicants Application Forms, Privacy Declarations, *Working With Children Check Statements* and Agreements will be kept on file with the Life and Mission Team-Formation Directorate at the Oceania Province Centre, Brisbane.
- f. The Province Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme Coordinator (PERVSC) consults with ministry leaders to determine the availability of placements that match the applicants' skills, qualifications and experience.
- g. If a situation occurs where there are more volunteers with appropriate qualities, experience and qualifications seeking placement than there are positions available, the Ministry Leader makes the final decision based on consultation with the relevant Regional Formation Coordinators.
 - i. The PERVSC is responsible to broker and support such consultation.
 - ii. The spirit of consultation should be to balance the best interests of the ministry and the volunteer applicants.

Selection Procedures

- a. The final placement decision of each volunteer rests with the Ministry Leader with the ratification of the Directors Life & Mission Teams - Formation & Ministries.
- b. Once the RFCs consider that they can anticipate that their applicants will successfully complete their preparation process they recommend their placements to the PERVSC who, in turn, makes recommendations to the Ministry Leaders and to the Directors Life & Mission Teams - Formation & Ministries.
- c. RFCs are responsible to conduct a referee check before recommending applicants.

Commissioning Ceremony

After the applicant has been accepted as a volunteer and prior to their departure for ministry, a commissioning ceremony is recommended. This is a valuable opportunity for the volunteer to be sent forth by his/her support network and the broader Edmund Rice Network. It is an opportunity for the commitment of the volunteer to be publicly acknowledged and for the broader Edmund Rice Network to express their commitment to the volunteer.

The Regional Formation Coordinator will be responsible for this commissioning

Ministry Placement Stage

General

During the ministry placement stage there is a two-fold focus of doing the ministry work and continuing the volunteers formation to ensure that they can do the best possible work in a manner that is safe, personally and for the ministry, and to ensure volunteers have the best possible chance of positively bringing the experience into their life on return home.

Generally, the initial period of volunteer placement should focus on building relationships with people of the local community and the residential community before beginning to “do”. This will not always be appropriate in placements such as schools, but it still remains a healthy principle to keep in mind.

Because of the effects of culture shock there will not be a probation period. The volunteer must be prepared to experience culture shock and be willing to see it through (with the knowledge that it will be difficult). If the volunteer leaves during the stage of feeling great frustration with the host culture, then the experience may be detrimental for all involved. (Of course, the Volunteer can choose to leave at any time but hopefully at a time that is healthy for all involved).

Generally, the duration of a *long-term* volunteer placement will be from one to three years. If volunteers wish to continue to live and work with the people of the local community beyond their original term they will need to re-negotiate with their Ministry Leader, Regional Formation Coordinator and the Directors Life and Mission Teams - Formation and Ministries.

Short-term volunteers (3 months up to 1 year) wont, generally, have the same opportunity to build deep relationships and they may be more task focused with a specific skill set that the ministry can utilise. They will have many of the same conditions, expectations and responsibilities and where these differ will need to be negotiated with the Ministry Leader and the PERVSC.

Support

The volunteers will need the following support to do their required ministry work and for continuing their formation.

a. Induction

The Ministry Leader is responsible, at the beginning of the placement, for inducting the volunteer into the mission, ethos and operational procedures of the ministry, including;

- i. Child care safety and protection.
- ii. Protocols for; security, crisis and emergency situations, the public use of written articles, photographs and video images, political activity and human rights involvement.
- iii. Accountability and grievance procedures.
- iv. The ministry’s background, context and mission.
- v. History.
- vi. Local area details shops, service recreational facilities.
- vii. Role Description and Supervision Procedures.
- viii. Residential Community Living.
- ix. The ER Volunteer Scheme’s relationship with the volunteer during placement.

b. Local Mentor

The ministry will ensure that each volunteer is linked with a mentor from the local community to guide the ongoing development of the volunteer's understanding of how to live and work appropriately with their community. This process will be a component of the ministry's own relationship structure for ongoing guidance in working appropriately with the local community. (Eg, its local mentor or advisory/reference group)

If it is not possible to have a person from the local community as the Mentor someone associated with the ministry and the local community with considerable cross-cultural experience could be appointed.

Generally it would be expected that the mentor and volunteer meet together at least once a month.

In some situations, it may not be possible to access a local mentor, in which case a member of the residential community or ministry team with more experience/understanding of the local community would need to take on this role.

c. Language

Volunteers will be expected to take a language course in the appropriate local language as a strategy to attempt to connect and build meaningful relationships and to respectfully consolidate the principal of coming as a guest. This demonstrates that the volunteer is valuing the language and culture of the people.

It is important to be aware that language learning should always be negotiated with the local mentor so that it is done in an appropriate way. In some cultures there may be some elements of the peoples' language that is off limits to the foreigner

d. Welcoming Ritual/Celebration

A ritual or celebration to welcome the volunteer is an affirming way to introduce her/him into the ministry and the local community.

It will provide a link to the volunteers sending community and the pre-departure commissioning they celebrated.

It can also provide the connection with the local community, re-affirm the coming as a guest principle and it could help avoid any negative sense, on the local community's part, of the revolving door of strangers entering and exiting their community.

e. Structured Reflection

The ministry will provide the volunteer with regular, structured opportunities to reflect on their work and their experiences.

A worthwhile reflection process will assist in linking back to the volunteers' preparation programme, where they articulated their motivations, hopes and dreams, and consolidated their justice spirituality framework. It will challenge or possibly deepen some of the assumptions and perspectives that the volunteer came to the ministry with. The process will also assist in developing authentic relationships with both the residential and local communities and can provide a positive springboard to the volunteers' life on their return to home.

Ministries have different ways of providing this regular, structured reflection. Regular shared prayer with a meal and discussion is a common process. Where it is possible, a programme of spiritual accompaniment / direction is recommended as a powerful support tool.

Volunteers are also expected to be responsible for their own individual reflection processes. eg. prayer, meditation, tai chi, art, journaling, dance, running, etc.

f. External / Internal Professional Supervision

Ministries will provide external professional supervision, if it is accessible, if they require their volunteers to practice in fields such as; the health professions, social or youth work and community development, where external professional supervision is considered the expected professional standard.

All other roles that ministries require their volunteers to perform need to be supervised internally, as it is expected paid staff within the Province would be.

g. Contact with a Province Support Person

Each volunteer is appointed a Province support person who will remain in regular contact with them throughout their placement via, email, phone or text message/sms. As well as being a role that is primarily about encouragement and support, it can also provide three other roles;

- a. An extra accompaniment role supporting the volunteer's inner journey through the building of a relationship that will allow the asking of meaning-making questions. Sharing print and web-based articles can also be helpful.
- b. Helping to monitor the volunteer's well being and emotional health.
- c. Being a link and support for the volunteer's re-entry phase.

The Province support person will need to be someone familiar with the Ministry Leader, ministry site and the volunteer. Where possible he or she should be someone who has been a part of the preparation process or is connected to the volunteer through the community or network the volunteer comes from.

h. Encouragement Towards a Big - Picture Awareness

Volunteers are encouraged to link with other community organisations and programmes that are working in related areas to the ministry. This will;

- i. Broaden the volunteers' experience and understanding of the context and issues that the ministry and local community are dealing with.
- ii. Indirectly help the ministry to expand its relationships and possibly mitigate against any insular tendencies.
- iii. Provide an opportunity to broaden support for the volunteers which in turn can lessen dependence on the Brother's community.

i. Continued Personal Support Network Contact

The Ministry needs to ensure that volunteers have regular opportunities to connect with their own culture, family and friends. Such contact helps ground volunteers in their own identity, it will assist them with moving through the culture-shock process and may help mitigate against the development of any tendencies towards co-dependency or a "saviour" complex.

As far as is reasonable, the volunteer should be given access to resources that facilitate the maintenance of these relationships, eg. mail, email, skype, telephone & fax. The ministry should provide free access to at least one of these facilities for the volunteers' use. Such use should be reasonable and negotiated.

Where it is appropriate, friends or family members should be encouraged to visit.

Structured, Staged Withdrawal Leave

Ministry leaders are encouraged to negotiate leave plans with their volunteers, especially with long-term volunteers, that provide structured, staged withdrawals from the ministry community and re-connection with home and/or support network (where possible). The frequency of these withdrawals would be generally higher in the first three to six months of the placement.

The ministry is responsible for the transport expense of any mandatory withdrawal leave it expects its volunteers to undertake.

Where a volunteer is likely to be financially disadvantaged by mandatory withdrawal leave it is suggested that they are paid an allowance that is the equivalent of their regions unemployment benefit. Financial disadvantage could result because volunteers are not supported by the ministry or the ministry community while they are on withdrawal leave and are likely to experience increased financial obligations.

In ministries where it is not practical to encourage the volunteer to return home the ministry leaders are asked to monitor and encourage their volunteers' access to opportunities to meet and maintain contacts with people of their own culture and to periodically physically leave the local ministry community.

j. Preparation, Accommodation, Living and Volunteer Expenses Support

How Edmund Rice Volunteers are supported varies from site to site according to the local community culture, the staffing model of each ministry and the particular needs of the volunteer.

Volunteers apply to participate in the scheme because of a strong sense of justice and spirituality and they want the opportunity to live simply and, to an extent, live in solidarity with those who live the lifestyle of the world's majority of people. The Scheme acknowledges that living in solidarity does not mean replicating exactly the local people's living standard

Volunteers generally benefit greatly from their experience but they also make personal sacrifices, some very significant, in undertaking a placement. They stop earning an income and may lose a bond or a lease on their rental accommodation. They may have to forego mortgage payments. Perhaps they risk falling behind in advancement at work. To that end the Scheme attempts to apply a no-loss / no gain principle to how long-term volunteers' needs are met.

For the case of long-term volunteers airfares and costs generated in preparing to volunteer are met either by the site ministry or the sending ministry.

The Scheme aims to ensure that its volunteers' basic accommodation and living needs are met. Each ministry undertakes to provide its volunteers accommodation that is at least of a comparable standard to that of the ministry community's. Ministries provide their volunteers with basic food and domestic supplies. Some ministries also provide a small living allowance for incidental expenses.

Where long-term volunteers are staff of an ER Ministry or EREA School and their placement is a part of their approved formation plan they may be offered assistance to reduce impediments to their placement, such as a subsidy on a mortgage's interest. Their ministry or school is encouraged to continue their seniority and long service accrual and its employer superannuation contribution.

Long-term volunteers are placed for 1-3 years. If a volunteer is placed for a full year at a school, he or she is classified a full-time volunteer, regardless if the full school year is less than twelve months

Responsibilities	Ministry	Province OPC /RF	Volunteers			
			RF – Regional Formation	Long –Term	Short-Term (6 -11mths)	Short-Term (3-5 mths)
Preparation						
Prep Course Costs		RF	RF	RF	RF	RF
Approved Vaccinations		OPC	OPC	V	V	V
Visas	M		M	V	V	V
Travel To Ministry	M		M	V	V	V
Travel & Medical Insurance. (Province Policy)			OPC	OPC	OPC	OPC
Language courses (*Assisted by RF during Preparation)		RF*	V *	V	V	V
Four-wheel driving (Timor Leste)			RF & V	RF &V	RF &V	RF &V
Placement						
Living allowance / assistance	M		M	M	M	M
Accommodation	M		M	M	M	M
Spiritual Direction /Accompaniment	M		M	M	M	M
External Supervision if required	M		M	M	M	N/A
Province Support Person Monitoring		RF	RF	RF	RF	RF
Mandatory withdrawal leave travel Expenses	M	M	M	M	M	N/A
Post Placement						
Debriefing		RF	RF	RF	RF	RM
Counselling if required		OPC	OPC	OPC	OPC	OPC

j. Pre-Departure Debriefing and Review

At the conclusion of the volunteer's period of service and prior to his/her leaving the placement the Ministry Leader shall arrange for a debriefing and a review of the placement. Participants in the program may include the volunteer, ministry leader, mentors, support people. Generally the two process can be combined but in situations where there's been trauma and crisis or significant stress or conflict, it may be more appropriate to separate the debrief.

k. Protocols

The following protocols have been developed and are detailed in the following paragraphs:

- a. The use of written articles, photographs and videos during and after volunteer placement.
- b. Security, crisis and emergency situations.
- c. Political activity and human rights involvement.

Protocols for the Use of Written Articles, Photographs and Videos during and after Volunteer Placement

In a cross cultural setting there is an assumption that the volunteer, who has come as a guest to work with the ministry's local community, will only have a limited understanding of the protocols and nuances of the community's culture.

In some cultures and situations information that a volunteer may pick up inadvertently is considered to be only appropriate for specific initiated or gender groups within the culture.

- a. Care is therefore needed to ensure that, out of carelessness or ignorance, the local people and their culture are not portrayed in an insensitive manner.
- b. Volunteers need to seek guidance from the ministry leader and local mentor on how the work of the ministry and the local community, with whom it works, are publicly displayed in print or pictorial form.
- c. Care is also needed not to damage the reputation or standing within the community of the ministry and its work by publishing information without the guidance of the ministry leader or local mentor.
- d. Before publishing anything that mentions individuals by name, or clearly identifies them, their permission needs to be sought.

As in Australia and New Zealand, the principle of seeking permission to take and use photographs or video images of people also applies in the cross-cultural ministry situation. This may not always be a matter of law but it is a matter of respect and affirmation of the volunteer's status as a guest within the culture he or she is volunteering in.

- a. With images of young people care needs to be taken to avoid them being identified to a specific location
- b. Photographs and video images, where individual people are clearly identifiable, ought only be taken and used if there is an established relationship with the person on the part of the ministry or the photographer and permission has been given. As a general rule of thumb, the clearer an individual is identifiable the greater the need for a relationship.

Security, Crisis and Emergency Situations ¹

In times of crisis and emergency the volunteer is strongly advised to listen to, and follow, the advice of the Ministry & Residential Community Leaders. Generally these leaders have substantial experience and are in touch, through their relationships with the local community, with what is happening on the ground in an evolving security or emergency situation.

¹ Some information in this section has come from the "Handbook for Provinces with Marist Lay Volunteers"

- a. While on placement abroad, the volunteer should register with the Australian Embassy or mission in the country, particularly if security is an issue in the country.
- b. The ministry and residential community should have a Critical Incident Management Plan which includes an established evacuation procedure, including an alternate route if the airport is closed. They should also have clear lines of decision making that apply in an emergency. All such information should be well known and understood by all community members.
- c. The Ministry and Residential Community Leaders and the Province Edmund Rice Volunteer Scheme Coordinator are responsible for applying the procedural processes of the Province's Critical Incident Management Policy² to the ministry's local context. This will include not only, on the ground management & communication procedures, but also lines and protocols of communication to and from the Province leadership, staff and volunteer's families and the media.
- d. Where security is an issue, the Ministry and Residential Community Leaders should be in regular contact with the Australian Embassy or some international NGO (such as the International Committee of the Red Cross) in the country to keep up to date with the security situation.
- e. The ministry and/or the residential community should maintain enough cash, in an appropriate currency, to be able to purchase plane tickets out of the country in an emergency.

Political Activity and Human Rights Involvement³

Any political activity that a volunteer participates in will be seen, at least by some people, as an activity of the residential community and/or the ministry itself. This may undermine the acceptability of the ministry and/or residential community within the local community – in the eyes of the authorities or the eyes of the people of the local community. Consequently, the volunteer should not participate in any political activity without the agreement of the Ministry Leader.

The Ministry Leader does not have to agree with the political stance taken by the volunteer but has to agree that the action will not jeopardise the acceptability of the Christian Brothers in a particular country or community. If the action may jeopardise the future involvement of the Christian Brothers in that region, then the Ministry Leader will need to discuss more broadly whether the action is worth the possible consequences.

Where human rights abuses are suspected, the information should be passed on to relevant human rights groups (but only with the permission of the person who shared the information). Before the volunteer begins any direct involvement with a particular human rights issue, she/he must gain agreement from the Ministry Leader regarding his/her actions in the light of broader implications for the ministry and the Christian Brothers in the region. If a volunteer is being sent to a region where human rights abuses are well-known then it is advisable to write a protocol about involvement in human rights activity in the region. (The Marist Bureau of International Solidarity in Rome has examples of such protocols).

² The Province's Critical Incident Management Policy is in draft form as of 20/10/2008

³ Information in this section has come from the "Handbook for Provinces with Marist Lay Volunteers"

I. Grievance

Ministry leaders and The PERVSC will ensure that the Province Grievance Policy is adapted for the Ministry's context and applied.

The RFC or The PERVSC may offer mediating support if required for any grievance between volunteers, ministry or ministry community

The PERVSC is responsible to mediate any grievance a volunteer may have with his/her Province Support Person

m. Agreement

The volunteer agreement is a result of dialogue between the volunteer, the Regional Formation Coordinator and the Ministry Leader of the volunteer site and is an agreement between the volunteer, the Directors, Life and Mission Teams – Formation and Ministries and the Ministry Leader.

The Volunteer Agreement may address the following issues, depending on the placement site:

- The beginning and end times of the volunteer placement;
- Living conditions for the volunteer;
- A structure for association with the local Christian Brother community;
- Finance;
- Legal arrangements;
- Health;
- Transport;
- Insurance;
- Links with home;
- Holidays;
- Role description;
- Accountability structures;
- Accompaniment/mentoring/supervision in placement;
- Returning home;
- Expectations of the receiving community;
- Acculturation structures;
- Security/crisis/evacuation Plan;
- Departure from the volunteer placement;
- Post-placement support; or any other relevant issues.

Post Placement Stage

Re-Entry

On return to the volunteer's home base/province, the volunteer is assisted in the transition by the Province:

- a. The volunteer is offered a form of accompaniment that will help him/her in the transition process.
- b. Returned volunteers are asked to have a medical check up within three weeks of their return. This is to enable if any appropriate Province support is required as a result of injury or illness that occurred as a result of the volunteer placement.
- c. The Regional Formation Coordinator will ensure that volunteers are debriefed within three months of their return.
- d. If required, the volunteer is to be encouraged to participate in a programme of
 - i. Counselling: general, grief or trauma.
 - ii. Cultural transition.
- e. The volunteer is to be linked with a regional network of returned volunteers.
- f. The volunteer is invited to share aspects of their experience with their sending community, the Edmund Rice Network and/or their ministry. The Province will assist in providing opportunity for this process, if necessary.

Evaluation

The Regional Formation Coordinator will ensure that the returned volunteers participate in an evaluation of their placement. The emphasis of the evaluation will be on the effectiveness of the Scheme's procedures as they relate to the volunteer's experience. The evaluation will be done in conjunction with the volunteer's pre-departure review.

