

Institution: University of Northumbria at Newcastle		
Unit of Assessment: 14 (Geography and Environmental Studies)		
Title of case study: Enhancing policies at the UN and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to improve volunteer support mechanisms and protections		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Matt Baillie Smith	Professor	01/09/2001- present
Aisling O’Loughlen	VC Fellow	08/01/2018 - 01/11/2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: December 2015 - December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Millions of humanitarian volunteers are operating within increasingly fragile situations, complex emergencies, or protracted conflicts. Most of those volunteers are local and come from affected communities. A lack of knowledge about these volunteers and their potential vulnerabilities increases the risk of this work. Northumbria University’s Professor Matt Baillie Smith’s research on the marginalisation and vulnerabilities of Global South volunteers enables him to identify and recommend improvements in organisational practices. As a result, a series of resolutions adopted by the United Nations (UN), and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, have prioritised volunteer safety and well-being for the first time in peace and development policy. These led to a new Global Volunteering Alliance of 73 countries, representing over 10,000,000 volunteers, volunteering being addressed in a UN Global Call to Action, and prioritisation of volunteer safety in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Strategy 2030. On the ground, this has resulted in new practices of volunteer support, including provision of insurance, recognition of psychological challenges, and new posts in volunteer development.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Millions of volunteers are active globally in disaster relief, humanitarian response, and action at community level [R1]. Baillie Smith has conducted critical international research projects at Northumbria University since 2008. This work includes an ESRC seminar series (2008-10) that focused on international volunteering and citizenship [R2], as well as subsequent AHRC-funded research on faith-based volunteering (2009-10). Baillie Smith challenged dominant thinking around volunteering and development. This delivered a body of work demonstrating key insights into how gaps in evidence-collection and poor conceptualisation of the volunteer experience weakened the policymaking of global volunteer organisations [R2-R6].</p> <p>In 2013, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) – the world’s largest humanitarian volunteering organisation – recognised Baillie Smith’s track record of research on volunteering and invited him to collaborate in research to analyse its global volunteering policies, practices, and challenges. From 2013-2015, Baillie Smith co-designed and conducted the <i>Global Review on Volunteering</i> (Global Review) in partnership with IFRC [R1], working across 158 countries with over 600 volunteers, staff, and stakeholders taking part in surveys and interviews. Baillie Smith’s analysis identified key failings of existing volunteering practices and strategic priorities for policy development. These included: the risks to volunteers’ safety and security; the absence of psychosocial support for volunteers; inadequate training for local volunteers; the absence of volunteers in decision-making processes; and inadequate insurance and remuneration policies [R1, R3].</p> <p>Baillie Smith developed his findings from the Global Review to identify how the privileging of Northern mobilities, temporalities, and biographies has produced fixed conceptions of agency and experiences in the geographies of volunteering and development, resulting in a lack of</p>		

attention to more diverse volunteering experiences [R4]. Although local volunteers far outnumber international volunteers in the Global South, research and policy debates tend to overlook their experience; they are often absent from narratives or only discussed through the prism of their experiences and encounters with international volunteers [R6] or in terms of cheap service delivery [R3]. Another frequently overlooked aspect of volunteering is addressed in research on the gendered dynamics of volunteering in emergencies, which shows how local volunteering can both challenge and entrench some gender norms [R5]. Moreover, work on volunteer remuneration reveals how donor strategies can reinforce or create new inequalities [R3]. Overall, Baillie Smith's research has shown how volunteer-involving organisations, donors, and governments have limited understanding of local volunteers' experiences, not to mention volunteering's relationship to their livelihoods.

Baillie Smith's research has fundamentally challenged how volunteering is conceptualised and has shown that understandings of volunteering have been subservient to processes of transnational mobility and encounters that fail to capture the fluidity and mobility of what volunteering can mean [R6]. This failure silences and makes parochial, non-Western forms of volunteering that do not fit with or support established ways of doing development, meaning there is an urgent need for improved volunteering policies and practices [R6].

Baillie Smith's focus, highlighting the weaknesses of global volunteering policy, has delivered major international projects with key sectoral stakeholders, including the Swedish Red Cross Volunteering in Conflict and Emergencies Initiative. This research aims to understand the experiences of volunteers in conflicts and emergencies and jointly develop responses to the challenges they face. Other partners include Voluntary Service Overseas, and the research has also attracted significant ESRC/GCRF funding to research refugee youth volunteering in Uganda, and its impacts on skills acquisition, employability, and livelihoods.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1. S. Hazeldine** and **Matt Baillie Smith (2015)** 'Global Review on Volunteering Report' International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies ([available here](#)). Peer reviewed by expert advisory board of researchers and practitioners

R2. **Matt Baillie Smith** and N. Laurie* (2011) 'International volunteering and development: Global citizenship and neoliberal professionalisation today', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **36**(4): 545-559 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2011.00436.x>

R3. **Matt Baillie Smith**, B. Fadel, **Aisling O'Loghlen**, and S. Hazeldine** (2020) 'Volunteering Hierarchies in the Global South: Remuneration and Livelihoods', *Voluntas* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-020-00254-1>

R4. N. Laurie* and **Matt Baillie Smith (2018)** 'Unsettling geographies of volunteering and development', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **43**(1): 95-109 <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12205>

R5. J. Cadesky, **Matt Baillie Smith**, and N. Thomas (2019) 'The gendered experiences of local volunteers in conflicts and emergencies', *Gender and Development*, **27**(2): 371-388 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13552074.2019.1615286>

R6. **Matt Baillie Smith**, N. Thomas, and S. Hazeldine** (2019) 'Rethinking volunteering and cosmopolitanism: beyond individual mobilities and personal transformations', *Geopolitics* <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14650045.2019.1666106>

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Research Grants

G1. Joint PI, **Matt Baillie Smith**, Voluntary Service Overseas: Volunteering Together, 2020-2021 (GBP140,000).

G2. PI, **Matt Baillie Smith**, ESRC/GCRF Skills acquisition and employability through volunteering by displaced youth in Uganda, 2019-2021, GBP787,234 (ES/S005439/1)

G3. Research Director, **Matt Baillie Smith**, Swedish Red Cross Volunteering in Conflict and Emergencies Initiative (ViCE), 2015-2017, GBP109,000

G4. CI, **Matt Baillie Smith**, AHRC/ESRC Youth transitions, international volunteering, and religious transformations, 2009-2010, GBP74,874 (AH/G016461/1)

G5. PI, **Matt Baillie Smith**, ESRC Activism, volunteering and citizenship. ESRC funded Seminar series, 2008-2010, GBP15,312 (RES-451-26-0561)

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Northumbria research has been central to a shift in the recognition of the contribution of Global South volunteers, and support for volunteers in international organisations. This is evidenced by impacts on international policy and organisational thinking and practice, with new policies and locally embedded support mechanisms within the work of the United Nations (UN) and both the IFRC and the wider Red Cross and Red Crescent International Movement, both internationally and locally.

4.1 Impacts on volunteering policy at the UN

The UN recognises volunteerism as an important component of any strategy aimed at poverty reduction and sustainable development but evidence about how to manage this is lacking. In addition, the UN agency UN Volunteers (UNV) has deployed tens of thousands of volunteers of over 150 nationalities to serve in more than 130 countries as well as supporting volunteering within countries. Following publication of the Global Review in 2015 [R1], the UN issued a report which highlighted how the Global Review *'will strengthen volunteer management knowledge in the organization and wider humanitarian sector'* [E1, p8]. This was followed, in December 2015, by UN Resolution 70/129 *'Integrating volunteering into peace and development'* which specifically drew upon the previous report to set policy priorities for the next decade. This was the first ever Resolution to offer a *'specific prioritisation of humanitarian volunteering and the safety and security of volunteers'* [E2, p2]. It was signed by 193 countries, and *'calls upon States to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for volunteers'* and the need *'to work together with volunteer-involving organizations to support efforts to enhance the protection, security and well-being of volunteers'* [E1, p37, para12].

The resolution also recognised the role of volunteers within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and called on UNV to collaborate with others to strengthen volunteer engagement with this agenda. UNV issued a Global Call to Action in which one of six commitments pledged to recognise and support the full diversity of volunteering practices – particularly in the Global South – and to address inequalities and risks in volunteering by *'promoting and enacting policies, safeguards and norms that remove inequalities in volunteering tasks and ensure benefits are shared between and across genders, age groups and social groups; and ensuring the safety and security of volunteers by implementing new models for insurance and physical and mental health support, as well as building support for the protection of volunteers in humanitarian work'* [E2, p4]. Baillie Smith's research and stakeholder engagement was recognised as *'instrumental in shaping the Global Technical Meeting which led to the Global Call to Action'* [E2, p2].

Other UN initiatives also draw on Baillie Smith's work. The 2018 Report of the UN Secretary General, integrating volunteering into the Agenda for Sustainable Development, directly cites *'the project led by the Swedish Red Cross in partnership with Northumbria University and the IFRC National Societies that focuses on the experiences of local volunteers'* [E3, p14]. The importance of the Global Review and ViCE initiative in shaping policy are further referenced in the 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report, the UN's flagship publication on volunteering [E4]. This report cites the critical importance of Baillie Smith's work, notably in recognition that

'volunteers are key actors in crises', highlighting the vulnerabilities and lack of robust organisational policies to provide protection from the physical dangers and psychological risks that local volunteers face [E4, p20, p68-69].

4.2 Impacts on organisational policy and practice at the Red Cross and Red Crescent

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network which responds to catastrophes and leads humanitarian and development projects around the world. The Movement is made up of 192 National Societies with 13.7 million volunteers worldwide. The Global Review has directly impacted how the Red Cross and Red Crescent International Movement develops and implements policies to protect volunteers globally. In 2015, 169 governments signed the 32IC/15/R5 Resolution on The Safety and Security of Humanitarian Volunteers [E5, p16, footnote1]. This Resolution drew directly 'on findings collected through the International Federation's 2015 Global Review on Volunteering' [E5, p8] and committed: to cooperate in preventing and mitigating risks to volunteers, to collaboratively implement initiatives that will promote a safer environment for them, and to focus on gender-related risks. Specifically, it called on National Societies to make every effort to provide their volunteers in a timely manner with the best safety related information, guidance, training, protective equipment, psychological support, and insurance [E5, p8-14].

A 2019 progress report on the Resolution's implementation notes progress by national societies towards providing psychosocial support. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Sudanese Red Crescent, efforts and progress have been made in providing volunteers with access to psychological first aid and psychosocial support (PSS) [E5, p18]. The Swedish Red Cross has established phased training for volunteers, combining e-learning, physical learning opportunities, external referral mechanisms, and internal follow-up to systemize and institutionalize PSS for volunteers [E5, p18]. Informed by Baillie's research, this also led to the development of 13 global standards to provide robust guidance for ensuring safety, security, and well-being of local volunteers [E6, p2].

At the end of 2019, the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies approved its Strategy 2030. Of seven Transformations, the second focuses on improving diversity of, and security for, volunteers [E7, p21-22]. The IFRC attests that 'Baillie Smith has made a direct contribution to the Strategy 2030 which will underpin the operations and practice of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement globally for the next decade' [E7, p1].

In parallel, in 2017 the IFRC created a new Global Volunteering Alliance (GVA) in response to findings identified in the Global Review [E8]. At the second GVA annual meeting, the GVA was described by IFRC president as one of the IFRC's most important initiatives in recent years, enabling societies to understand each other's differences and needs and to help all parties support volunteers [E9]. By 2020, the GVA had 73 participant countries representing a combined total of nearly 10.5 million volunteers [E10]. Adjmal Dulloo, IFRC Global Volunteering Coordinator, confirms 'It was due to the findings from the Global Review of Volunteering that we created the GVA' [E10].

4.3 Impacts on volunteering support in-country

Baillie Smith's research has contributed to new policies being enacted on the ground by national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Balthazar Bacinoni, the Burundi Red Cross Director of Organisational Development and Humanitarian Diplomacy, has identified the Global Review as directly contributing to policy changes to benefit thousands of Burundian volunteers: 'After reading the Global Review we began to include psychosocial support for volunteers involved in the operations and started focusing on the security of volunteers ... making safety and security a priority and including insurance for volunteers in our National Policy of Volunteering, revised in 2019. We are also prioritizing volunteer retention, better equipment and, finally, the formal recognition of volunteers on the statute of our National Society for the first time' [E11].

The Swedish Red Cross funded the ViCE Initiative (Baillie Smith was research director), which led to the delivery of new services and support mechanisms for volunteers. This also included

specific solutions in certain countries, such as volunteer insurance in Honduras and developing leadership and initiative skills in Sudan *'which emerged from the participatory methods deployed by Baillie Smith'* [E6, p2]. It also included the creation and appointment of ViCE Advisors responsible for volunteer development and improving safety, security, and well-being in traumatic environments in Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and the Ivory Coast [E6, p3].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Ref.	Source of corroboration	Link to claimed impact
E1	2015 'Report of the Secretary-General 70/118 Integrating volunteering in the next decade', UN General Assembly: New York and 2015 'Resolution 70/129 Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond', UN General Assembly: New York	Influence of Global Review on UN resolutions and policy
E2	Testimonial - UNV Plan of Action Coordinator	Corroborating influence of the study on Resolution 70/129 and impact on shaping the Global Call to Action
E3	2018 'Report of the Secretary-General 73/254 Plan of action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', UN General Assembly: New York	Research cited in paragraph 52
E4	2018 'State of the World's Volunteerism Report', United Nations Volunteers: Bonn	Recognition of Baillie Smith's work p4, p52-53
E5	2015 Resolution 32IC/15/R5, background report and progress report 2015-2019, International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: Geneva	Evidence of Global Review influence on Resolution, and the effects of the Resolution's implementation
E6	Testimonial - Swedish Red Cross Senior Advisor	Confirming role of GRoV in shaping ViCE Initiative and its impact on determining priorities for measures on safety and security of volunteers in the Global South
E7	Testimonial - Head of IFRC Global Innovation Team	Corroborating the impact of research in the development of Strategy 2030 guidelines, shaping Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's priorities for the next decade
E8	2016 'Volunteering Plan of Action Preparatory Meeting Report', IFRC: Geneva	The IFRC Governing Board endorsed the Plan of Action for Volunteering, which in 2017 led to the creation of the Global Volunteering Alliance of National Societies
E9	2018 'Report of the Global Volunteering Alliance Meeting', IFRC: Geneva	Acknowledgement of value of Global Volunteering Alliance
E10	Testimonial - IFRC Global Volunteering Coordinator	Confirming the role of the research in shaping the creation of the Global Volunteering Alliance. Contributing to systemic change on volunteering policy and learning in the organisation
E11	Testimonial - Organisational Development and Humanitarian Diplomacy Director, Burundi Red Cross (2019)	Confirming national impact and concrete changes on volunteering management in the country following GRoV recommendations