



Over the years, many HVO volunteers and partners have requested guidelines and suggestions on sharing their experience to promote HVO's mission of improving the "availability and quality of health care through the education, training, and professional development of the health workforce in resource-scarce countries."

Upon their return home, volunteers are frequently asked to share their experience, either in an informal way (with colleagues and friends), or more formally with local media or professional groups such as the local medical society. For many volunteers, their HVO overseas assignment is a transformative one, opening new horizons and introducing new perspectives on day-to-day life and work. Sharing can be fun and may serve to entice others to consider serving in a similar capacity.



Many of our colleagues are accustomed to presenting academic work, but a presentation about a volunteer assignment can be rather different. These guidelines are meant to provide some insight and guidance on how your presentation can impact your audience. It is based on feedback provided by volunteers and incorporates their experiences, both positive and negative. Best wishes as you share your story!



TELLING HVO'S STORY

Many of your listeners may have never traveled outside the US, and your talk may be their introduction to low-income countries. You have had the chance to spend time in a different culture, and have developed an awareness and an understanding. For your audience, without such an experience, your words and images will shape their understanding of HVO, so it is important that your presentation accurately and clearly conveys our mission and approach. You want your presentation to create an excitement and interest in the countries where we work, so please don't shock your audience out of a potential volunteer or travel experience!

Emphasize that HVO focuses on teaching, training, and professional development for health workers, to strengthen health care systems. Globally, there is a vast, unmet need for health care workers, (currently estimated at 17.4 million) which disproportionately affects low-income countries. To address this need, HVO works with established professional institutions, many of which have a long and distinguished history. We work with these institutional partners to develop projects that address the needs they have identified, are sustainable, and build local capacity. Training focuses on local diseases and health conditions, and draws on available resources and technologies. Projects focus on long-term development and promote life-long learning, to encourage those trained to provide care and educate others. Although your volunteer assignment was of a short-term nature, HVO's commitment is for the long-term, with each volunteer building on the work of earlier volunteers.

We have created a global community that brings together a diverse group of health care workers, professional associations, overseas health institutions, organizational partners and dedicated individuals who work together to bring long-term solutions to the global health workforce crisis.



Similarly, it is important to emphasize that the colleagues with whom you work at HVO sites are professionals, many of whom may have had international training. Many have access, albeit erratic, to the internet and are eager for information and professional contact with colleagues worldwide. Often, they may be the only professional in their field and may be responsible for a wide swath of the country. These professionals are making a commitment to their own country's health care, and HVO is there to assist with further education and training based on the country's national health plans. As you

think about your presentation, it might be helpful to imagine one of your colleagues from the site in the room with you. That will remind you how important it is to be culturally sensitive and respectful of the people, the institution, and the country. Imagining your colleague's situation will help you choose appropriate language and avoid language that might sound patronizing or condescending.

"A picture is worth a thousand words." No matter how well you verbally present HVO's work, a single image can damage your presentation. Share photos of you and your colleagues at the site, at work and relaxing together, sharing in each other's company. It is important to convey that HVO is developing relationships with the people we are training so show them as professionals and maintain their dignity. This also applies to photos of the facility. You may have taken a photo of a dumpster just outside the operating room, but such a photo should not be shared in your presentation, as it may be the only memory your listener retains. Similarly, with photos of children, share the ones of the lively, smiling children playing in the courtyard, not ones of children with flies covering their faces. Be particularly sensitive about showing patient photos, to preserve the person's dignity, and avoid showing anything that is intrusive or violates a person's privacy.

Think about your audience and tailor your presentation accordingly. With health care colleagues, you may wish to discuss some of the work challenges, the appropriate technology used in a resource-scarce situation, the diseases or health conditions unique to that area, etc. With local community groups (church, Rotary Club, etc.), you may wish to give a broader presentation that looks at global health issues and how HVO is addressing the vast shortage of global health workers. In a presentation with the media, you might focus more on why education is crucial in addressing global health issues and the role of short-term volunteers in meeting such a vast need – a global shortage of over 17.4 million health care providers.



Remember how you served as an "ambassador" representing HVO and the US during your volunteer service; similarly, you now are an ambassador for the people and facility where you volunteered overseas.

Finally, many volunteers speak of how their experience transformed their lives, renewed their enthusiasm for their work -- as they addressed new challenges, and gave them new insight to their own professional abilities. Convey your enthusiasm, your amazement at what can be accomplished with limited resources, and encourage your audience to consider volunteering (or donating) to support global health care!

Giving a talk?

Be sure to visit HVO's website - www.hvousing.org/speakers - where you can request the HVO PowerPoint in addition to our "Meeting-in-a-Box," which includes handouts, posters, and messaging resources.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

HVO'S VISION & VALUES:

HVO believes that all people should have access to high quality health care delivered by local health professionals, and we are working towards that goal.

Volunteers serve in partnership, in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, and ensure the dignity of the people with whom we work, both professionals and patients.

The power of education is that it is a two-way street; we teach and learn from our peers and colleagues at the sites.

KEY TALKING POINTS - MAKING THE CASE:

- There is a global shortage of over 17.4 million health care providers.
- This shortage disproportionately impacts low- and middle-income countries. The World Health Organization reports that a minimum of US \$44 per person is needed to provide basic, life-saving health care. In 2011, 26 countries spent less than that, with 6 countries spending less than \$20.
- The “brain drain” contributes to a significant outflow of health care professionals from low- to high-income countries.
- Many resource-scarce countries do not have the financial resources to invest in continuing education for health care providers.
- Investing in the education of health care providers is critical to building the capacity of a country’s health care system to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies as well as to provide basic health care.
- HVO partners with local institutes to deliver innovative, effective programs to provide better patient care in child & maternal health, essential surgery, trauma care, rehabilitation, cancer care, and more.



POINTS TO REMEMBER

LANGUAGE TO USE WHEN SPEAKING OF COLLEAGUES AT THE SITE:

- Hard-working, dedicated
- Resourceful, innovative
- Creative, inquisitive
- Generous
- Appreciative of volunteers

WORDS/IMAGES TO AVOID:

- Natives, peasants, poor people
- Third-world, undeveloped
- Charity
- Emotive words: dirty, slovenly, disgusting, greedy
- Descriptions such as “fly-encrusted”
- God-forsaken place
- Hopeless, primitive, ignorant, uncared for
- Mission trip (this has a religious connotation & HVO is an independent, secular organization)

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

- Be sure to get the name & contact information of the reporter
- Be prepared; what do you want to say?
- Find out the reporter’s angle for the story
- Listen carefully to the questions
- Provide direct, concise answers; avoid jargon
- Speak in complete sentences; the quotes will be more effective
- Never say anything you would regret seeing in print, hearing on the radio, or viewing on TV
- Provide the reporter with contact information for HVO’s office and refer them to the website (www.hvousing.org) for more information
- Let HVO know about your interview and when it will be published
- Let the reporter know that you and HVO staff are available for follow-up questions, if necessary

Enjoy sharing your experience!



Health Volunteers Overseas
Transforming Lives Through Education

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