

## **I. INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

Philippine District

Rationale:

The Philippines, like in any developing country, has a lot to share to other people from other nations. It offers a glimpse of the world's paradoxical realities on the levels of economic, political, socio-cultural and religious, and other evolving nature of the present day, for better or for worse. The wide gap, between the rich and the poor, the blended cultures due to colonization history, and the effects of migration and influence of youth cultures from all over the world. This complex background gives the RSCJ mission in the country a rich context, as it takes the situation of poverty as reference point.

The communities of RSCJ, the people in the communities we work, serve and live with, are also a mirror of these realities. It is a very great challenge which we in the Society can be with the people, respond to the needs on the levels of physical, psychological and spiritual, and at the same time learn from them.

The International Volunteer Program can very well resonate with our mission situation. Our internationality is a gift to the mission, and this is the same blessing that we would like to share to our international volunteers. A mutual transformation and enrichment of the Volunteers and the receiving community can take place in the process.

## **II. OBJECTIVES**

For our objectives in participating in the International Volunteer Program, we would like to take the 4 imperatives of our JPIC

documents as our guiding spirit, “Being Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World”.

## 1. Washing one another’s feet

“... we acknowledge that power is a reality with which to contend in the Society of the Sacred Heart. Power is available to us in a variety of ways: knowledge, culture, language, use of information, roles and services entrusted to us, access to funds... “<sup>1</sup>

The volunteer program allows us to level off the imbalance of knowledge in different areas: cultures, differences in language, use of information, different capacities in roles and services entrusted to us, economic status-access to funds, among others. At the same time impart our own richness to those who come to us.

## 2. Transforming and being transformed

“... JPIC is also a work of structural transformation that involves the Spirit: communal, social, political, economic, ecological, planetary and cosmic transformation. One integrated movement weaves together the contemplative and active aspects of our Sacred Heart charism...”

When volunteers come to join us in any of the RSCJ community or mission in the Philippines, the volunteer lives in a community where the abovementioned movements are experienced. Mutual transformation happened in the interaction with the people whom the RSCJ’s and mission partners work and serve with.

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<sup>1</sup> Being Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World, 8

<sup>2</sup> ibid, 11

### 3. Caring for our common home

In his encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis urges us to listen to “The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (#49). It is always the poor who suffer most from the degradation of the earth. As educators for justice, we are committed to reflection, critical analysis and action in order to effect changes in the root causes and systems that endanger our planet and those who are most vulnerable.”<sup>2</sup>

### 4. Welcoming people on the move

“Do we care or have we become numbed by the bombardment of images in mass media and social media? Are we moved to acts of care or are we overwhelmed by feelings of helplessness, paralyzed by fear, or occupied by important works related to our mission? Do we care, or have we inadvertently fallen into the trap of what Pope Francis calls the ‘globalization of indifference?’”<sup>3</sup>

The Philippines may not have “people on the move” like in other countries, where people make a physical escape from their country of origin, and move geographically to another place of safety, presumably. But there are many Filipinos who find themselves in a situation of fear and helplessness, among other paralyzing situations. The volunteers, can also be exposed to these situations of people who do not feel secure in many ways. No job, no house of their own, no one to turn to in moments of great need, because government systems to take care of its people do not function.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid16

<sup>3</sup> Ibid,20

In all this, volunteers coming can experience life with our people who are in the same predicament of being unsettled because of socio-economic-political dilemma.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PHILIPPINE DISTRICT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Philippine District has been blessed with volunteers, young and older people, coming to live, work and serve with the RSCJ, staff at work and fellow volunteers. We have also regular youth who come for a shorter period for community service at certain times of the year. Most of the time, those who come are from developed countries, most of them have already travelled in different countries, with broader perspective of the world, and other gifts that they bring with them. Most of all, they have the deep desire to share and learn from anyone whom they encounter in the area where they are assigned. The RSCJ's and mission partners have developed a way with which anyone who comes will be received and given the proper accommodation, orientation and make it a point that the volunteers are taken cared of during their stay in the country.

### IV. RSCJ COMMUNITIES, MISSION AREAS FOR VOLUNTEERS

The international volunteers will be assigned to one or various ministries, depending on their skills and interest, and on the needs of the local ministries, and other considerations. Discernment as to what is best for the volunteers is mutually

discerned with the one sending and the receiving community/District.

1. Annunciation Community: Saint Madeleine Sophie Foundation (SMSF) , Inc. , Montalban, Rizal.

The SMSF Center is located in the same compound as the RSCJ district formation community (and the ASIANZ regional novitiate in the near future), about an hour's ride from the District Center and other RSCJ communities in Quezon City. Montalban is a fast growing urban municipality, but still with many rural or rurban characteristics.

The volunteer can be assigned to the following ministries:

- a. Tahanan ng Mahal na Puso day care/pre-school
- b. Tutorial program for public elementary and high school students
- c. Youth formation program
- d. Parents' formation program
- e. Reading program
- f. Short term project involvements that SMSF may engage in such as disaster response, livelihood skills training, etc.

2. Mater Admirabilis Community

The RSCJ mission in Northern Samar is under the umbrella of Sacred Heart Institute for Transformative Education (SHIFT) Foundation, Inc.. Northern Samar, a rural area, and one of the poorest provinces in the Philippines. It engages in informal education ministries

SHIFT Foundation supervises the following ministries:

- a. Sacred Heart Learning Center (nursery school for 3-5 years old children)
- b. Organic Farming (lettuce and other vegetables, seedlings of vegetables and fruit trees, etc.), immersion programs in agriculture, exposures
- c. Campus Ministry at the University of Eastern Philippines (nearby university)
- d. Duck, chicken and pig raising
- e. Pastoral Work with village community – families, women, youth... sewing and organic farming
- f. Disaster Management
- g. Formation programs – Giving retreats, recollections, leadership training and values education
- h. Venue and other facilities for training-seminars
- i. Cacao Growing Project

SHIFT is in partnership with government and private agencies and offices in relation to its ministries and to peace and development programs.

## V. OTHER DETAILS

### 1. Duration

- a. Short program: 1 – 4 months
- b. Long program: 4 months and above

2. Age: 18 years old and above

3. Language: English

**RELIGION:** Philippines is dominantly a Catholic country. The volunteer coming may not be a practicing Catholic or not a baptized Catholic, but must be willing to respect and live with Catholic practices, including regular community prayers.

**HEALTH:** Fit to do volunteer work, certified by a doctor, with necessary vaccinations. Personal medicines and other health needs are ensured to be personally taken cared of. Capable of adjusting to a very hot, humid, cold or rainy/wet weather. With health insurance during the volunteers program.

**ATTITUDES:** Maturity to deal with change in living conditions (towards a less comfortable one), company and other changes in one's usual lifestyle. Openness to live and work with a community of RSCJ, Staff and volunteers, and other people from outside of SHIFT or SMSF, with whom one may deal with, occasionally.

Interest to learn from the local people and willingness to share anything, most importantly, oneself.

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** The SHIFT volunteer lives in-house, with the male or female staff in residence. The SMSF volunteer can reside either in in-house, or with a family in the neighborhood.

## FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### FINANCING

1. The volunteer coming from another country, during the period of volunteering-time of arrival to time of departure, is required to shoulder the ff.:
  - a. Air fare, back and forth, and other transport expenses that will be incurred, including tourism trips

- b. Living allowances, board and lodging, as prescribed by the receiving community
- c. Extension of visa
- d. Health insurance and any health expense
- e. Other unexpected expenses

## ORGANIZATION and COORDINATION of the PROGRAM

The District has a Team for International Volunteers Program, with a Coordinator. At the moment, the team communicates with each other regarding the program.

In the future, there is a plan to have a Mission Team Office to help in the coordination of the program.

## RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VOLUNTEER

During the period of volunteering, there will be a person assigned to follow up or guide the volunteer. This is presumably an RSCJ but can also be a lay person according to the need.

## FORMATION OF VOLUNTEERS

The volunteering time, way of life, relationships and interactions with people in the community/family where the volunteer lives, other outside contacts, and other activities, combined with prayer and reflection times, are natural part of the formation of volunteer.

However, there are particular activities that pertains to the volunteer formation.



## General Formation Program for Volunteers

1. General orientation to the Philippines , and the place where she will be assigned. Initial exchange of information can take place even before the volunteer comes.
2. A follow up person (an RSCJ or another person) will be assigned to the volunteer for a guide in the ministry and other matters of daily life. The frequency of meeting with the follow-up person depends on the need of the volunteer and mutual availability of both parties. During the pandemic, we have seen that if there is a need for a follow up, even with an RSCJ or another person not present in the place where the volunteer lives, online communication is possible.
3. In Metro Manila area, aside from the RSCJ community in Montalban, there are other RSCJ communities where the volunteer can interact with and learn from. The volunteer can be invited to visit or join activities of other RSCJ communities in the area.
4. Each community has a scheduled times of prayer, reflection, recollection, recreation, integration days and other activities that can help the volunteer.
5. In Samar, there is a community of RSCJ, staff and local volunteers that undergo a regular formation programs which the international volunteer can join in. Some of them are the following:
  - A. Individual day(s) of recollection, reflection, prayer or rest will be encouraged and scheduled.
  - B. The volunteer is **invited to** join the community of RSCJ and SHIFT Staff and Volunteers to the following:
    - a. Regular individual and community prayer
    - b. once a month community day of recollection

- c. once a week community recreation (evening, usually on Saturdays).
  - d. once a week Blessed Sacrament Adoration.
  - e. twice a month faith sharing
  - f. twice a month community meeting (things that concern the community, daily lives, etc.
- C. Integration days as the volunteer ends her stay, quiet days, writing reflections evaluation (written and sharing/"feedbacking"/thanksgiving celebration for the volunteer leaving

In any place where the volunteer will stay, she is free to suggest anything that will help her in her growth in different areas. At every stage, discernment is encouraged so that the volunteer can fully benefit from her stay in the Philippines.