



Refugee camp for Syrian people in Turkey

Dec 14, 2017 11:42 GMT

Northumbria leading global debate on volunteers in conflicts and emergencies

A team of Northumbria University academics are presenting the findings from a joint initiative with the [Swedish Red Cross](#) at a global conference in Stockholm, Sweden, this week.

The event is the first of its kind internationally and has brought together academics, practitioners and policy-makers to explore and understand the experiences and needs of volunteers whose voices are too often missing from academic research, humanitarian and development policies, and decision-

making processes.

How does being a volunteer in a conflict or emergency affect emotional wellbeing? What can the international community do to support volunteers in crises that they themselves are caught up in? This week's Volunteers in Conflicts and Emergencies ([ViCE](#)) conference, hosted by the Swedish Red Cross in partnership with the Centre for International Development at Northumbria, is exploring these very issues.

The Swedish Red Cross and Northumbria have been collaborating on the [ViCE](#) Initiative to listen to and hear the voices of volunteers in six countries: Afghanistan; Honduras; Myanmar; Sudan; South Sudan; Ukraine. The conference will share the first findings of this research, exploring what volunteers' experiences mean for contemporary humanitarian and development thinking and practice.

[Professor Matt Baillie Smith](#), Director of Northumbria's Centre for International Development, said: "Most research on volunteering focuses on affluent volunteers helping the needy. The ViCE Initiative reveals how people are often volunteers and victims at the same time, requiring new thinking about the ways volunteers are recruited, deployed and supported, and the ways being a volunteer can impact relationships with families and communities.

"Data from the project is raising important questions about the ways volunteering in conflicts and emergencies is gendered, the emotional impacts of volunteering and how volunteers try to implement humanitarian principles on the ground in challenging and isolating circumstances."

Northumbria's Centre for International Development is a dynamic group, bringing together academics, practitioners and students to promote research, consultancy, teaching, training and public engagement on issues of global poverty and inequality, the communities and individuals who experience this, and the policies, practices and approaches that seek to address it. The centre's specialist areas of focus include Governance, environmental resources and sustainability, Volunteering, activism and civil society, and Participatory design and digital civics. For more information about Northumbria's Centre for International Development, click [here](#).

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