



The Basics

This document is created during the [Frame\(v\)work project](#) (coordinated by [Egyesek Youth Association](#)) thanks to the input and collaboration of 7 different international and regional networks of volunteering organisations around the world. The aim of this document is to bring together our common practices and procedures in order to ensure the quality of our projects, discuss our values and our common identity as organisations working with IVS. It is a reference document and it should be supplemented with the network specific practical procedure.



About .pdf version

PDF versions might be outdated. Always check the most updated version of IVS Exchange Guidelines on this link: <https://ccivs.org/ivs-exchange-guidelines>

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Voluntary service

*"Voluntary service is an exchange between an individual, or a group of individuals and a local community. The volunteer or group of **volunteers offer time, energy and effort to a project of benefit to a community**, and through this project the community offers the volunteer or group of volunteers an opportunity for experimentation, learning, personal and collective development."*

Cotravaux, France

Voluntary service is an activity done by natural will and individual choice (not by order), it is without expecting materialistic benefits (not profit) and it aims to improve society (not only individual).

High-quality volunteering occurs when the three dimensions of volunteering are balanced and in harmony: volunteer **learning**, **service** to the hosting organization, and **community** development

Three dimensions of voluntary service



*"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time.
But if you have come because your*

Learning takes place on multiple levels during voluntary service. Volunteers gain knowledge about the country they travel to, immerse themselves in the culture of fellow volunteers and the local community, and develop technical skills through their participation in the project's work and

liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

Aboriginal activist group, Queensland, 1970s



activities. Formal, non-formal, and informal education—integral learning—aims to foster confidence in both volunteers and their hosts, empowering them to recognize their personal potential as tools for positive change

Service dimension is when volunteers carry out tasks beyond their own learning and is essential for the success of the project, sustaining of the host organisation or supporting the community where the service takes place. Activities range from basic, self-sustaining tasks to impactful and collaborative actions. Volunteers take care of themselves by cooking, cleaning and doing other practical tasks. These activities usually carry a lower level of learning for the volunteers, but they are essential for the success of the projects. Meaningful activities are done while carrying out the work and/or the intervention the local community needs. The learning outcome of these impactful activities is the actual reward for the volunteers in exchange of their service. Volunteers are compensated by the personal growth in knowledge, skills, and sense of value for both themselves and the local community.

Community is the social and physical context where volunteers implement voluntary service. Their contribution and service must tackle an actual need of the local community and its members. Volunteers cooperate with the local community as fully as possible in useful work and exchange knowledge, skills and experience with the members of the local community. This is the element which distinguishes voluntary service from other activities like internship, school classes or travel and work.

Real volunteering is when these 3 dimensions are in balance and harmony!

i Decolonisation

International Voluntary Service values **decolonization as a holistic approach**. Our goal is that all IVS projects are decolonized. These guidelines distinctively specify the **rights, responsibilities and practicalities** of each actors in IVS. It can't be stressed enough that, in order **for IVS to be decolonial, marginalized participants** must be included in every aspect of the volunteering activities and their **expressed will and needs** be taken **into full consideration**.

Each act of inclusion, and each action informed by such consideration should **intentionally engage with the global issues that keep enabling exclusion and marginalization**.

In this sense the most important responsibility of all actors is to initiate a **decolonial journey**: starting with an internal reflection among team members, and then, in conversation with your partners and key community stakeholders, explore the connections between colonial experiences and current inequalities in a global and local sense.

International Voluntary Service (IVS)

The **International Voluntary Service (IVS)** movement was initiated by a group of **young conscientious objectors** (people who refuse to join the army and fight wars) and **sympathisers from various countries**. After having refused to fight in World War I, in the 1920s, they started **gathering in groups and assemblies** and eventually put their **values into practice by joining a village reconstruction community effort in Esnes-en-Argonne, near Verdun, a site of some of the heaviest fighting in France**.

There, while removing rubble, rebuilding roads, houses and bridges, **convictions of mutual enmity were challenged**. That's how **a collective conversation started** about **peace, disarmament** and **civil service** rather than military service. Especially after WWII, several other initiatives were set up and a global network of IVS organisations was created to support reconstruction efforts.

IVS supports collective resilience & acts of transformational, horizontal solidarity rather than conservative, vertical charity.

Overall, for **over a century**, IVS exchanges have steadfastly pursued peace through **nonviolent action, fostering international understanding, mutual respect and transformational solidarity**. This pursuit is made possible by the **historical and continuous collaboration** of formal organisations, informal groups, communities or associations of people, and free individuals. All of them organise and participate in volunteering activities aimed at **supporting the inclusive participation of everyone**, regardless of class, nationality, skin colour, religion, age, ability, sex, gender and sexual orientation, socio-economic status, level of educational or professional attainment or political views.

IVS pursues peace through nonviolent action, fostering international understanding, mutual respect, and transformational solidarity.

If **differences are made visible and valuable**, any possible grounds for discrimination must be eliminated, in a spirit of equality and recognition of the universal rights to safety, dignity, respect and sociopolitical inclusion. Additionally, IVS promotes **social and climate justice, human rights, critical thinking, active participation, democracy, global citizenship, and collective intercultural learning**.

Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS)



The Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) is a global network dedicated to fostering a culture of peace, regenerative community culture, and intercultural understanding through International Voluntary Service. Established in 1948 under the aegis of UNESCO, CCIVS unites organisations worldwide, providing a space for co-constructing collaborative and transformative grassroots projects.

CCIVS is about collaboration between different actors to make projects happen and to obtain change. Volunteers, volunteer organisations, local communities, donors and policy makers are important actors. By supporting the networking of all IVS actors, CCIVS reinforces the social transformation that grassroots members are working on. CCIVS considers volunteers and International Voluntary Service organisations as **changemakers** who are committed to social change and human rights and who are eager to create lasting change for both the volunteers and the community. CCIVS believes that a peaceful world is based on **mutual understanding, building trust and solidarity** while embracing each other's cultural differences. This is achieved through working voluntarily side by side thus fostering participatory and intercultural dialogue and learnings. This leads to more **equitable and inclusive social relationships and challenges** existing power dynamics and discriminatory practices. Through International Voluntary Service, CCIVS and its members promote the **human rights framework** as a basis for a just world. We advocate for everyone to live in dignity, be able to take informed decisions and be valued equally – irrespective of gender, skin colour, religion, nationality, age, ability, sexual orientation, social status or political views. CCIVS rejects all forms of repression, violence, abuse, exclusion, discrimination and inequality. The

Sustainable Development Goals are a good framework to show how International Voluntary Projects contribute to the global agenda for **a sustainable world**. Yet, CCIVS adopts a more radical and holistic approach that acknowledges and integrates our interdependent existence, based on a peaceful, cohabitation model with other species and within the planet's limits. IVS projects support the social, cultural, economic and ecological transition that is needed to build a regenerative and reconciliatory world that promotes a circular-inclusive economic model based on global, social and climate justice.

International Voluntary Service Networks members of CCIVS

| *IVS networks reflect global democratic decision-making and advocacy.*

Service Civil International (SCI)



*SCI is an international network dedicated to **peace** work*

SCI is a volunteer organisation dedicated to promoting a culture of peace by organising international voluntary projects for people of all ages and backgrounds. The organisation consists of 40 branches and an ever growing number of partner organisations.

International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE)



*ICYE is an international network focusing on **long-term volunteering** projects*

ICYE provides intercultural learning experiences and opportunities in more than 40 countries, especially supporting young people in building personal and professional competencies through international volunteering. Together with the volunteers and the communities, we promote global solidarity, social justice, gender equality, peace and environmental sustainability.

International Building Organisation (IBO)



*IBO is a **historical** network within the IVS movement*

IBO is a non-profit organisation that provides people of all backgrounds with opportunities to take an active part in helping local community projects. They offer a variety of unique volunteer opportunities, ranging from building projects to social or ecological projects.

Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisation



*Alliance is the **European** network within the IVS movement*

Alliance is an International Non-Governmental Youth Organisation. It represents national voluntary service organisations that promote intercultural understanding, peace, democratic participation and equality, in the spirit of respect for universal human rights.

In cooperation with CCIVS

Network for Voluntary Development in Asia (NVDA)

Network of African Voluntary Organisations (NAVO)

American IVS Network

- Coming soon -



*NVDA is the **Asian** network within the
IVS movement*

NVDA is a network of international voluntary service (IVS) NGOs in Asia & Oceania. NVDA was founded in 1997 and now has 30 member NGOs in 20 countries/area.



*NAVO is the **African** network within
the IVS movement*

NAVO is a voluntary organisation of the sub-regional organisations in Africa, comprising of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Voluntary Youth Organisations (VYOs) in all functional areas with primary aims of global community development.



Read more

 [Universal Charter of IVS](#)
