

GLOBAL REFLECTION MEETING FINAL REPORT

7-11 APRIL 2025



**MUSIC AND VOLUNTEERING
FOR A DECOLONIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA**



**Written by Helene Perold
Independent Social Research Consultant,
South Africa**



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My sincere thanks go to all the participants who worked so hard to chart the elements for CCIVS' strategic journey going forward, and for affording me the opportunity to share in this experience and to make new friends in the process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the CCIVS Global Reflection Meeting (GRM) part of the Voices for Change project co-financed by the European Union – held from 7–11 April 2025 at L'Ermitage, Versailles, gathered 28 participants representing CCIVS member organisations, CCIVS Youth Committee, Executive Committee and activists, partners, and facilitators. Its purpose was to reflect deeply on the history, current realities, and future of International Voluntary Service (IVS), particularly against a backdrop of geopolitical, environmental, and technological change. Participants explored the evolution of IVS since its inception post-World War I, examining key historical milestones, current challenges, and future opportunities. Sessions included mapping the IVS journey, analysing survey findings from 75 global organisations, and debating shifts in inclusion, diversity, climate action, digitalisation, and decolonisation.

Key insights emerged around the resilience and relevance of IVS despite major shifts: from early civil reconstruction efforts to today's struggles with shrinking civic space, restrictive mobility policies, and funding challenges. Trends such as voluntourism, climate justice advocacy, AI integration, and intergenerational volunteering were critically analysed to inform strategic future directions, and a SWOT analysis was conducted to identify strengths, vulnerabilities and opportunities for the movement in the volatile global context.

A central focus of the meeting was the futures and foresight work, which applied scenario planning and strategic visioning methodologies. Participants identified four key drivers likely to shape the future of IVS: funding barriers, natural disasters, artificial intelligence (AI), and voluntourism. Using the Futures Wheel and 2x2 Matrix tools, they mapped possible and probable future scenarios, exploring how different combinations of these drivers could impact IVS. Scenarios considered the balance between technological advancement and human connection, and between funding availability and disaster frequency. This exercise allowed participants to envision preferred futures and to propose strategic milestones, partnerships, and success indicators needed to navigate these complex trends.

The meeting reinforced the Advocacy Asks priorities for IVS, but identified the need to define them more clearly and concisely, and to communicate the value and uniqueness of IVS projects to external audiences effectively. Participants discussed how to connect broader policy goals to specific, achievable local actions, and mapped stakeholders, decision-makers, allies, and influencers critical to achieving intended outcomes. Practical next steps were defined to strengthen IVS's policy role through strategic partnerships, improved communication, diversified funding, and deeper community engagement.

The evaluation of the GRM showed overall positive feedback from participants, particularly in terms of facilitation (4.52/5) and pre-event communication (4.48/5). Sessions were generally well-received, with high scores for the Experts Round Table and historical reflections, though future-oriented discussions scored slightly lower. Advocacy Asks and Future & Foresight were highlighted as standout sessions. The GRM concluded with a strong affirmation of CCIVS's values-driven identity, commitment to decolonised practices, and the necessity for innovation and adaptability to ensure that IVS remains a transformative force in an increasingly complex and fractured world.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Voices for Change Music and Volunteering for a Decolonial Environmental and Social Justice Agenda

"Voices for Change" aims to strengthen the International Voluntary Service (IVS) movement by developing new partnerships, integrating volunteer actions and connecting with the International Music Council to address global environmental and social justice challenges. This project focuses on amplifying marginalised voices, fostering inclusion and diversity, and advocating for policy change through participatory processes. It seeks to revolutionise the perception of IVS, emphasising to young people that it entails more than just participating in a volunteer project - it is also about the life-changing experience of volunteering.

The activities include capacity building, knowledge exchange, hands-on community actions, and advocacy. Voices for Change will culminate in a "Change Capsule" comprising a Song, Videos, Policy Proposals, and an Advocacy Strategy, all underpinned by Impact Measurement. The project underscores the imperative of global solutions to global challenges, rejecting limiting regional approaches and affirming the right of people worldwide to contribute to EU policymaking for a decolonised environmental and social justice agenda.

It is coordinated by the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS), in partnership with the International Music Council (France), GSM-Youth Services Centre (Turkey), Cantieri Giovani (Italy), Kenia Voluntary Service (Kenya), South Africa Workcamps Association (South Africa), Legambiente (Italy), Field Services and Inter-Cultural Learning (India), ESTYES (Estonia), INEX-SDA (Czech Republic), Fundación Proyecto Ecológico Chiriboga (Ecuador), and the Palestinian Center for Media, Research and Development (Palestine).



INTRODUCTION



The CCIVS Global Reflection Meeting (GRM) – Voices for Change was held at L'Ermitage in Versailles from 7-11 April 2025 (<https://www.ermitage-fondacio.fr/>). At this time of enormous change in the global environment, the intention was to create a space to delve deeply into the needs of the IVS movement, to reflect on what has come before and what is coming next, and to enable members to share their concerns and ideas for the future development of the network.

In particular, the purpose of the GRM was to:

- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of current IVS trends in respect of inclusion and diversity, environmental sustainability, digital developments in AI, and a decolonised approach
- Increase the knowledge, skills and understanding of the consortium members through an analysis of current geo-political scenarios, and lay the groundwork for advocacy and policy-making within a decolonised approach

The GRM built on the results of the Future Trends in IVS Study Session (funded by the COE) that took place in Budapest in February 2025, and preceded the CCIVS General Assembly taking place in South Africa in November 2024.

Twenty eight participants attended the meeting from the Consortium partnership: 17 representing CCIVS member organisations, seven representing CCIVS in France, two representing the International Music Council, and two facilitators. The methodology used during the GRM included non-formal education tools such as storytelling, participatory mapping, interactive debates, engagement with experts in IVS and advocacy, and networking spaces through which participants were able to share best practices. In preparation for the meeting, participants were expected to review these documents:

1. CCIVS Strategic Plan 2022-2027
2. CCIVS Impact Measurement Report (2010-2020)
3. Results from the Study Session on Future Trends in IVS
4. 5 IVS Advocacy Asks Document
5. Advocacy & Policy Aspects of the Voices for Change Project
6. Results of the Needs assessment VFC
7. IVS statistics
8. IVS Exchange Guidelines
9. CCIVS Constitution



DAY 1 – 7 APRIL

DEEP REFLECTION

ON IVS:

PAST & PRESENT

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
09:00 - 10:30	WELCOME & CONTEXT SETTING	EXTERNAL POLICY INFLUENCE & EU ADVOCACY	DEFINING KEY PRIORITIES FOR IVS ADVOCACY	LEARNING FROM THE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COUNCIL (IMC)	REVIEW ADVOCACY OUTCOMES & FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS
11:00 - 12:30	HISTORICAL & STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF IVS	FUTURES & FORESIGHT METHODOLOGY - 1 -	IVS & IYUSD2026	UNDERSTANDING THE 5 IVS ADVOCACY ASKS	EVALUATION & CLOSING
14:00 - 15:30	THE ROLE OF IVS TODAY ➔ INSIGHTS FROM THE NEEDS ANALYSIS	FUTURES & FORESIGHT METHODOLOGY - 2 -		FUTURE SCENARIOS FOR IVS POLICY & FUNDING	MANAGEMENT MEETING
16:00 - 17:30	STRENGTHS, VULNERABILITIES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR IVS	FUTURE & FORESIGHT METHODOLOGY - 3 -		TRANSLATING ADVOCACY INTO POLICY ACTION	





The objective of Day 1 was to examine the historical evolution of IVS, discuss its current challenges, and gain insights from the Needs Analysis conducted in March 2025 as well as the outcomes of the Future Trends in IVS Study Session held in February.

The director of CCIVS, Vicky Lovelock, opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and introduced the two facilitators: Bogdan Imre and Helene Perold. Bogdan briefly gave participants an overview of the programme for the week, and during a short warm-up, participants greeted each other and learnt how to say 'hello' in at least three languages they didn't know before, after which each participant introduced themselves and shared their connection to CCIVS.

1.1 MAPPING THE IVS JOURNEY

Gianni Orsini presented a process whereby participants could explore the history of CCIVS from 1920 – 2025, locate their own experience within this timeframe, and learn from the history of the organisation about what needs to change going forward.

1.1.1 The IVS timeline



The day started by participants placing post-its on a timeline from 1920 – 2025, and then sharing in pairs the patterns that emerged in their IVS experience and what shifts they had seen occurring. Two people started their IVS journey in 1977 and 1986 respectively, 11 joined in the 1990s, 7 between 2000-2010, and 7 between 2010-2025.

Patterns in people's experience include the focus on building civil society, witnessing a tremendous growth of IVS between 1995 and 2010, and how CCIVS as the global coordinator of IVS organisations gave people's views a 'home'. Shifts in IVS over time included its expansion beyond Europe into other parts of the world, as well as shifts in participants' personal and professional development through their involvement with IVS. In the recent past, however, the IVS movement has been challenged by growing barriers to mobility such as visa restrictions, particularly for Global South participants.

Adli Daana (PCMRD) commented on the value of convening such diverse, intergenerational gathering from different countries and different backgrounds. **Aleksandr Kurushev (ESTYES)** shared his thoughts about the decline in IVS participation starting in 2010, saying that besides Covid, there were other reasons such as the massive introduction of European youth programmes which affected the IVS environment a lot. On the positive side, in 2010 the Erasmus programme opened the possibility of cooperation between Europe and all parts of the world for Europe, and the other way round. **Ragland Devadas (FSL India)** shared his observation on the shifts in IVS from physical to digital volunteering during Covid, and that technology is playing an important role in the IVS space.

1.1.2 Voices for Change

Vicky Lovelock then presented the Voices for Change project flow which showed how the project will amplify CCIVS' advocacy messaging through music and storytelling, bringing in community-based voices from different parts of the globe. Six organisations located outside the EU are involved. The aim is to connect grassroots activism with institutional advocacy, ensuring that local realities inform global decision-making through a decolonial approach to social and climate justice. Following the training, local actions will take place between June and August to gather community stories in Estonia, Italy, Turkey, Czech Republic, Palestine, Kenya, South Africa, Ecuador and India, supported by those trained in Impact Research and the MSC technique (April – August). The project feeds into the Symposium on Environmental and Social Justice to be held in South Africa in November, followed by the in person Project Management Meeting to take place in Hebron, Palestine, which will prepare the ground for the online summit EmpowerEU in June 2026. (See the presentation [here](#))

1.1.3 IVS Needs Assessment Survey

Guilliana Vaca Mueses (FUNPROCH) presented the results of the IVS Needs Assessment Survey which can be viewed [here](#). The report offers a comprehensive evaluation of the IVS movement across 75 participating organisations from four continents. The survey aimed to identify organisational challenges, capacity-building needs, youth engagement barriers, environmental and social justice priorities, policy advocacy efforts, funding challenges, and partnership dynamics.



1. Organisational needs and capacities

Organisations, particularly in the Global South, face significant challenges in implementing IVS projects, mainly due to limited funding, restricted access to cross-border partnerships, and a lack of formal recognition. Capacity-building needs center around impact measurement, fundraising, governance, and advocacy skills.

2. Youth participation

Barriers to youth engagement include financial constraints, lack of local recognition of IVS, and limited non-formal educational opportunities fostering leadership. Training priorities include climate action, social justice, digital skills, and intercultural learning, highlighting a strong interest in empowering youth for civic engagement.

3. Environmental and social justice

Pressing issues identified are climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, water scarcity, and systemic inequalities in energy transition. IVS is seen as a key platform for promoting environmental awareness, youth leadership, and community-based sustainability initiatives. However, colonial legacies and lack of resources continue to hinder progress.

4. Advocacy and policy development

Organisations recognise the need for stronger advocacy strategies to influence IVS-related policies at national, EU, and UN levels. Primary policy challenges include restrictive mobility policies, limited volunteer recognition, funding barriers, and a lack of decolonial approaches. There is a notable gap in awareness of EU and UN policies among surveyed organisations.

5. Funding and financial sustainability

Long-term, stable funding is the most critical challenge for organisations, especially those outside the EU. Participants advocate for diversified funding sources, capacity-building in fundraising, and equitable resource distribution favoring Global South initiatives. Bureaucratic hurdles and dependence on EU partners further complicate access to financial support.

6. Partnerships and collaboration

Equitable partnerships, capacity building, financial support, cultural sensitivity, and grassroots empowerment are essential for strengthening IVS collaborations. Participants emphasised the need for transparent communication, long-term sustainability, and inclusive decision-making processes.

7. Digital tools and AI

While AI and digital tools offer potential for enhancing advocacy, project management, and volunteer engagement, concerns about environmental impact, data privacy, and accessibility persist. Organisations advocate cautious and ethical use of digital technologies, ensuring they align with sustainability and social justice goals.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Formal recognition of IVS across local, national, and international levels is critical.
- Sustainable, long-term funding mechanisms must be developed to support IVS activities.
- Capacity-building efforts should be enhanced in areas such as advocacy, project evaluation, and financial sustainability.
- IVS organisations must foster more equitable partnerships, particularly involving grassroots and Global South stakeholders.
- Climate justice, anti-racism, decolonization, and youth empowerment must be integrated into all IVS initiatives.
- Digital engagement should be balanced with environmental considerations, promoting hybrid models where appropriate.

By addressing these findings, the IVS sector can enhance its impact, empower young people, and contribute meaningfully to environmental and social justice worldwide.

1.2 HISTORICAL & STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF IVS

Gianni Orsini (IMC) joined the GRM with two goals: First, to run the workshop during which we would look at the historical and strategic analysis of IVS; and second, to talk about the importance of memory, as outlined in his notes in **Memory as a Tool to Build the Future**.

In this document he points out that **memory** is important because it digs deep into the past, while it keeps the links with the present. *“In a changing time, memory might be useful, even crucial, in transmitting the essence, the values and the vision of the IVS, from the history into the current context. And **even values can be changing**: they are not immutable, they evolve. The memory of where we (IVS) come from can then help to validate if the same values still apply. If the current times can still be transformed by true values based on humanity, intercultural mutual learning and respect and respect for life! It is worth trying to check it.”*

Participants were divided into four groups, taking into consideration their age, geographic area represented, gender and experience of CCIVS. Each group was asked to consider a specific period in the history of IVS, based on materials and photographs that Gianni had developed using CCIVS archival material.

Methodology for the analysis and reflection

Each group received:

- A picture of an action of the period with a legend explaining a "typical" aspect of the IVS at that period
- A matrix on an A3 sheet divided in 4 squares containing:
 - A sentence summarising the historical context of the period
 - One sentence summarising the "structure" of the IVS organisations at that period
 - One sentence summarising the financial sources at that period
 - Some words characterising well the type of IVS of that period

Each group was asked to add other/different relevant dates (if any) to the timeline and to answer these questions, and argue about them!

- Do these words describe very well / not at all / somehow / the kind of IVS of that period?"
- Can you think of other words?

1.2.1 Pre-WWII: Origins of IVS

Bert Verstappen (CCIVS) reported back on the main issues discussed by this group.

- The IVS movement was started from concrete projects. The first project took place in Esnes-en-Argonne, near Verdun, in 1920 to reconstruct the village destroyed during World War I
- The projects were shaped within the framework of civil service as an alternative to military service. The intention was to contribute to building international understanding and friendship among common people across borders, but at the same time to demonstrate seriousness and discipline in this process
- The focus was on assisting the local population through concrete, physical work - in particular reconstruction after "natural" disasters. A larger project was held during the civil war in Spain to assist children and women.



**1918-1945 FIRST WORKCAMP IN ESNES, VERDUN 1920; SCI ACTION DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, 1937-1942
PHOTOS SOURCED FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVE OF SCI**

- The projects often lasted a few months. Most participants were male and the small number of women volunteers had traditional female roles - cooking and cleaning
- The first projects in Asia were held in India as from the mid-1930s
- Voluntary service organisations were set up in just a few countries. It was only after World War II that more national organisations were established and that international coordination started

1.2.2 Post-WWII: Rebuilding through volunteering

Aleksandr Kurushev reported for the group, saying that following WWII, this era was characterised by conflicts and resistance movements. The IVS movement was underpinned by a drive for humanism, moved by human feelings to do something without expecting anything in return. It was focused on solidarity action, lobbying to change things politically, not by funding or forced by others. During this period the IVS movement aimed to bring East and West together because there was this image of the enemy on both sides. IVS provided a tiny channel, but a real one, where people could meet and change, because people could not meet otherwise.



**RECONSTRUCTION WORKCAMP AFTER THE WAR IN
ALGERIA, 1963**
PHOTO SOURCED FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVE
OF SCI

“I think that it's very important because we have to see how much change we can achieve with our projects, bringing people to do work construction work or working with children, but how much influence they have done and impact on the locals and on themselves.”



Referring to the point about lobbying to change things politically, **Adli Daana** added that in 1982 CCIVS produced a solidarity statement against the war that Israel launched against the Palestinians in Lebanon, and distributed it all over the world, including the UN institutions.

“I think this is the core value of what we are doing right now. We are not talking about technical networks that is only dealing with numbers and figures and statistics.”



1.2.3 1990s-2000s: Expansion and institutionalisation

Ratherford Mwaruta (CCIVS) presented this group's discussion, which started by looking at the pictures of the Namibia campaign and workcamps with refugees in Croatia. The historical context during this period influenced and contributed to the formation of many organisations in Europe and elsewhere. For example, in Europe the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism contributed to more people participating in IVS. In Southern Africa, with the support of UNESCO, the Danish Association for International Cooperation Country offices (Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe), the Namibian government and The German Development Services, SCI and CCIVS organised a meeting in Namibia to put pressure on the Apartheid government, and this gave rise to the formation of three workcamps in the region: Zimbabwe Workcamps Association in 1991, AJUDE in Mozambique in 1993 and the Zambia Workcamps Association, which has since dissolved. Economic globalisation produced cheaper travel options which made cross-border travels in IVS more doable and between 1995 and 2000 large numbers of young people came together to live and work in solidarity, even though communication by post and fax was much slower than it is today. IVS gave young people status e.g. "I was in Africa, I was in Latin America". Significantly, during this period, European funding was easier to access and was more flexible. E.g. the German Development Service was funding administration courses in East and Southern Africa but the funds were not subject to conditions. It was about partnership, unlike the current system where we have a lot of conditions and the money is tailor-made to fit a particular program. So we now have a lot of projects which are tailor-made to meet the needs of funders, which doesn't take account of the needs and aspirations of the local community.

1.2.4 Present-day: Challenges and future prospects

Zaid Daana (PCMRD) presented this group discussion which identified youth dissociation as a major factor confronting IVS. The current generation is withdrawing from political issues and social justice engagement generally, with declining participation being driven primarily by social media. For example, with people spending an average of five hours on their screens and with many distractions going on, it becomes difficult to focus on issues aligned with IVS. Political shifts to the right in different parts of the world and the massive US funding cuts to international institutions and particularly the destruction of USAID, have all heightened uncertainty and anxiety in young people. In today's world, social media is indispensable and with IVS not having a large presence on social media, that is a big red flag.



As one of the group members mentioned, those IVS organisations on social media have very little following, which suggests this matter should be on the strategic plan going forward.

Gianni summed up the discussion by pointing out that a common thread running throughout the history of CCIVS is attachment, solidarity, and the will to change things. However, some attention needs to be paid to the use of social media in the IVS movement.

1.3 CCIVS AND UNESCO

Following these discussions, **Vicky** made a presentation on the history of CCIVS' relationship with UNESCO. See presentation [here](#).

1.4 DEBATING 'THEN' AND 'NOW'

Continuing the exploration of the historical and strategic analysis of CCIVS, participants were asked to debate three questions:

- What challenges existed 20 years ago vs. today?
- What opportunities exist now that didn't before?
- What happens if international institutions fail? (Exploring the collapse of global governance and its impact on IVS)

This session used a **'fishbowl' methodology**: Four participants were invited to take the four seats in the middle of the room and once they had finished speaking they vacated their seat so it could be taken by another participant. In this way the discussion was open to all who wanted to participate.

1.4.1 What were the challenges 20 years ago vs. today in IVS?

A key theme in this discussion was the dominance of technology that is reshaping the environment in which CCIVS operates and the impact this is having on IVS. According to **Linndgberg Morales Ruballos (CCIVS)**, the challenge is that technology is evolving so fast and that digital communication is very big and complicated. Back then people could focus more on the big issues such as peace, solidarity and rebuilding, compared to nowadays when

“so many issues are under the water and so complex to be understood”.





“Work camps mean you can learn to know other people, to grow with them, to gain the truth. Are we losing the possibility of changing ourselves given the dominance of digital communication?”

GRM participant



Chinmay Hebbar (FSL India) added that today we have easier access to cross-border communication, whereas in the past people needed to wait a long time to get a reply to their application for workcamps. Language learning is more generally available nowadays, making it easier to communicate with other volunteers.

Adli Daana (PCMRD) said that while communication used to be a bit slow and costly, the motivation (to volunteer) was really there. Nowadays the challenge is to find people with the true motivation for IVS. Visa restrictions also pose a challenge.

“How to motivate young people to take part in voluntary service?”

Gianni Orsini (CCIVS) agreed that the comms issue is a challenge nowadays. Workcamps are the essence of IVS, to live with people, to exchange, to be together, but nowadays people tend to use virtual reality. In his view AI shouldn't be seen as a danger - we have to accept it - but the challenge is to use it for peacebuilding and not to isolate, to isolate people. We need to get to know each other better.



“We can work together.”



Dorcas Jena (SAVWA) pointed to a monumental shift from local, greener choices to people choosing to take flights for their travel.

Bert Verstappen (CCIVS) described the competitive nature of the volunteering context and felt that the way work camp projects are organised is old fashioned – sending and hosting organisations – while voluntourism is more attractive to young people because it's faster and more customised. This puts CCIVS at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting more people.

Vicky Lovelock (CCIVS) responded by asking: What about other generations? Families who want to do projects; youth; but what about everyone else who potentially has money to travel and will go on organised travel?

“We may need to start shifting, open to a more intergenerational approach.”

In response, **Aleksandr Kurushev (ESTYES)** mentioned that some families are coming with teenagers and want to be introduced to community work, so IVS shouldn't only focus on youth. He has growing numbers of teenagers (ages 13-17) who are interested. **Linus Omondi (KVSO)** added that in the African context, 20 years ago very few Africans travelled outside their countries, but now that is increasing. So in Africa the motivation is still there, but we have to get more visas. It is also important to see how to expand IVS in the continent.

“YMCA and KENVO are movements that have been there for a long time, so what strategy can CCIVS learn from Africa?”



1.4.2 What opportunities exist now that didn't before?

Vicky Lovelock (CCIVS) mentioned a network named CIVS that does similar work to CCIVS, but for teens, and does it well. So it may be necessary to look at other organisations' best practices and to do training for good practices (not best practice which may be too difficult to implement). In addition, loneliness is the major factor as evidenced by e.g. mental health conditions in Europe. People feel isolated, but don't know where they can find friends. Mixed age camps might appeal to people who volunteered when they were young and now want to repeat the experience. **Linus** agreed, saying the motivation is there; these people still want to be of use, but lack opportunities to do so.

Ragland Devadas (FSL India) said that with the growth of technology has come online volunteering, as well as tourism volunteering,

“Basically tourism is a culture. Things are changing so much that we can't always do traditional things.”

Ratherford Mwaruta (CCIVS) cautioned that CCIVS shouldn't underestimate the advantage it has as a network, which has a lot of skills and should be able to come up with new programmes. CCIVS has done well in the past and needs to take advantage of its strengths. However,

*“the community needs to stay at the centre of our activities.
If we put all the emphasis on the volunteers, the project will die.”*

Julieta Blanco (CCIVS) suggested that now there is a good opportunity to widen the network and target organisations and people specifically, e.g. through LinkedIn, to build relationships and partnerships.



1.4.3 What would happen if international Institutions fail?

A number of participants felt that the international institutions are already failing. **Hana Al-Jamalova (INEX-SDA)** suggested that CCIVS needs to continue asking them for funding, but it is also necessary to find alternatives, such as regional sources, so that the organisation is less dependent on the international institutions. She also said that in her experience, young people feel that if they go into things funded by global institutions, they will be failed.

Ratherford Mwaruta (CCIVS) followed up on this, saying that international organisations impose programmes on the Global South

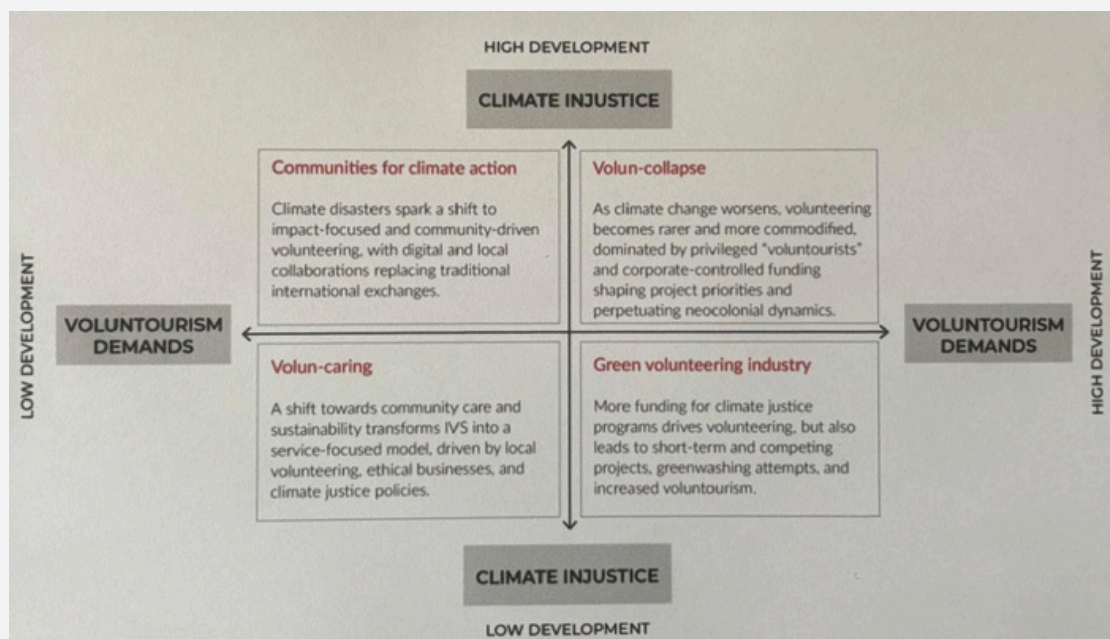
“which is why they are failing us. They are not protecting us; they only look at the figures, at money.

Structural adjustment forced a lot of organisations to close.

In Africa volunteering is part of our social fabric so it will never fail.”

1.5 NEW TRENDS IN IVS

After lunch **Julieta Blanco (CCIVS)** and **Dorcas Jena (SAVWA)** presented **New Trends in IVS** as identified during the Futures and Foresight study session in Budapest. Noting the downward trend in volunteer participation in IVS, as identified in the Global IVS Statistics Report of 2023), the study session identified a number of factors related to this development: decolonisation, climate injustice, new social movements, individualism, volunteers becoming clients, and mis/dis-information. The two critical trends selected for further study were: Climate Justice and Voluntourism. Using the ICS Centre’s Toolkit for Tomorrow, high and low development scenarios were generated for both issues as show in the image below.



The outcomes of this analysis produced the following projects and proposals:

- IVS partnering with Education (official recognition by schools and universities)
- International annual IVS fair
- Volunteers without borders
- Study session on decentralising CCIVS

Actions and next steps were identified as follows:

- Partnerships with educational and humanitarian institutions
- Decentralise networks
- Creating common guidelines within IVS to ensure we cooperate with organisations sharing our values
- Diversity funding streams

1.5.1 How does IVS adapt to these trends?

Following the presentation, participants divided into four groups to discuss their responses to the trends presented above. Some groups focused on process while others looked at themes that can be impacted by IVS;

Group 1 raised the issue of Intersectionality, trying to connect different contexts in which IVS is functioning e.g. genocide, social, and environmental developments.

Group 2

- Transformation is important in IVS
- What we do should be done formally so volunteers can form a community
- Critical thinking is getting lost in an overload of information, but we produce little in the way of critical analysis – it becomes more difficult
- Intergenerational synergy should be at the forefront of IVS – the transformation of society through voluntary work. We have been targeting youth, but we shouldn't neglect the middle and older generations
- Hands-on action is very important for gaining transformative experience vs more virtual activities
- Essential knowledge. Generations overlap but society is being fractured and we're losing the generational transfer, causing isolation. This is because we are destroying the important fabric of society

This report back elicited the following comments:

- Julieta is a migrant in a foreign country and doesn't speak the language, so she doesn't have contact with older or younger people, which is very weird. That's what migration can put one through
- As CCIVS we are trying to fight isolation, but this generation is more comfortable doing things by themselves

- In the Global South only young people have the time; in the Global North the intergenerational approach is more likely to work

Group 3: How to adapt to these trends?

- IVS has done it many times before
- Formal education is asking for x hours of volunteer experience = an opportunity
- In Asia, Hani's organisation is already connected to these programmes
- Funding – what about the ethics of getting money from big donors on auction?
- Recognition of IVS and the cross-sectoral connection of non-formal education with formal ed in universities and schools: how to bridge the gap between the two? This could provide recognition of the value of volunteering

Group 4: Based on the needs analysis ...

- Partner organisations are small with few skills and few resources
- The ability of people vs community needs
- Technology challenge
- Motivation can be the key of the volunteer organisation. E.g. in India IVS has to be recognised and the aspect of education is most important; in Europe it's different; in Zimbabwe experience drives interest
- IVS can create empathy to share a common objective and do something together

1.6 STRENGTHS, VULNERABILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IVS

Building on the previous sessions, participants were invited to consider the strengths and vulnerabilities of IVS today, and to look at opportunities and threats facing the organisation in the current context. This analysis would feed into the next day's work in the foresight sessions. Four group discussions produced the results of the SWOT analysis overview here and summarised below.

1.6.1 IVS SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- **Extensive global network and grassroots presence:** IVS boasts a worldwide reach with strong connections in local communities. This global network and local engagement enable the organisation to operate effectively at the grassroots level and collaborate across diverse regions. Such breadth provides access to diverse views and resources and fosters resilience through broad support

- **Established experience and infrastructure:** With a long history and well-established structure, IVS benefits from decades of experience and a solid organisational infrastructure. These core competencies mean IVS has the institutional knowledge and stability to organise and manage volunteer projects efficiently, leveraging its settled infrastructure and accumulated expertise
- **Values-driven mission and social impact:** The organisation is deeply value-oriented, promoting ideals of peace, tolerance, and human rights in its activities. IVS volunteers and staff demonstrate empathy, compassion, and non-violent communication, enhancing humanity and social capital in the communities they serve. This strong ethical foundation bolsters IVS's credibility and motivates stakeholders around a common humanitarian purpose
- **Diverse and inclusive culture:** Diversity is a clear strength – IVS brings together people of different ages and backgrounds (intergenerationality) and embraces a wide range of perspectives. The inclusive culture not only enriches the volunteer experience but also helps IVS adapt to various cultural contexts. By valuing diversity and fostering broad participation, the organisation can draw on a rich pool of ideas and talents
- **Strong volunteer engagement and skills:** IVS has a proven ability to organise and involve people effectively, resulting in highly motivated volunteers and staff. The movement's members possess extensive knowledge and skills, and they practice synergy and collaboration in their work. This human capital – combined with adaptability and resilience – allows IVS to maintain robust programs and respond to challenges capably

Weaknesses

- **Chronic resource constraints:** A major challenge for IVS is the lack of sufficient funding and human resources. Limited finances (and minimal fundraising capability) make the current model difficult to sustain. Likewise, the shortage of staff/volunteers – compounded by high turnover rates – strains the organisation's capacity, leading to a decline in volunteer numbers and loss of institutional knowledge over time
- **Weak communication and visibility:** IVS struggles with its communication strategy and external visibility. The organisation has not kept pace with modern communication channels – there is a noted lack of development in using new media and social networks – which contributes to low public recognition of its work. Inconsistent external communications and unclear messaging make it harder to attract volunteers and partners, limiting IVS's profile and influence



- **Limited partnerships and inclusivity:** Another weakness is insufficient connectivity with diverse partners and certain communities. IVS has relatively few collaborations with new stakeholders like universities or companies (as noted by "lack of connectivity with diverse partners"). Additionally, some programmes are not accessible to people from certain countries due to visa issues or grant restrictions, which undermines the organisation's inclusive ethos. The needs and contributions of younger participants may also be under-emphasised, suggesting the organisation could do more to engage youth fully
- **Organisational and skills gaps:** IVS faces internal skills gaps that hinder its effectiveness. There is a lack of project management and planning expertise within the team, as well as shortcomings in fundraising know-how. These deficiencies, along with difficulty of adapting quickly to a changing world, impede the organisation's ability to innovate and execute long-term strategies. Operational inefficiencies like these can prevent IVS from maximising its impact and responding nimbly to new challenges

Opportunities

- **Strengthening strategic partnerships:** There are significant opportunities to expand IVS's network through partnerships. Collaborating with universities, governments, and companies can provide new resources and increase credibility. Likewise, building stronger connections within global movements (e.g. through CCIVS, United Nations Volunteers) or partnering with specialised organisations (such as mental health groups) could open avenues for joint initiatives and broader support
- **Enhanced outreach and visibility:** IVS can greatly improve its public profile by leveraging modern communication tools. Increased use of social media and engagement with influencers would raise awareness of IVS's mission and projects. By boosting recognition and showcasing its credibility and success stories, the organisation can attract more volunteers, donors, and community support. Proactive outreach campaigns and better storytelling about IVS's impact represent a growth area for the future
- **Programme innovation and expansion:** The organisation can diversify and innovate its programme offerings to stay relevant. For example, IVS could develop more projects involving local volunteers (not just international placements) and promote its programmes as valuable educational or internship opportunities (aligning with schemes like Erasmus). Embracing intersectionality in project design – addressing multiple social issues and engaging people from varied backgrounds – would allow IVS to remain inclusive and impactful. New focus areas such as combating social isolation (positioning IVS projects as a way to fight loneliness and support mental health) are also promising avenues to increase social value and attract support

- **Embracing technology and innovation:** Adopting new technologies can make IVS more efficient and extend its reach. There is an opportunity to utilise digital platforms and even AI tools to streamline operations, enhance volunteer matching, or measure impact – provided this is done without compromising the human touch central to volunteering. Better use of online tools and data can help IVS adapt to changing trends and engage a tech-savvy generation of volunteers
- **Financial diversification and sustainability:** Finally, IVS can pursue financial independence by diversifying funding sources. Reducing over-reliance on a single grant or donor stream (in effect “cutting off” vulnerable funding ties) would give the organisation greater freedom and stability. This might involve developing income-generating activities, improving fundraising skills, or seeking endowments. Strengthening financial sustainability will allow IVS to invest in long-term growth and weather external shocks

Threats

- **Reliance on external funding:** IVS’s heavy dependence on external funding is a significant external risk. Changes in donor priorities or cuts in grants could severely impact operations. The broader decline in humanitarian/NGO funding and economic downturns also threaten the financial stability of the organisation, putting its programmes at risk if new funding sources are not secured
- **Competitive volunteer landscape:** The organisation faces competition from other volunteer and travel programmes. Initiatives like Erasmus-based volunteering, work-and-travel schemes, and a growing number of voluntourism companies or volunteer-matching apps present alternative opportunities for IVS’s target volunteers. These competitors can draw potential volunteers and funding away, forcing IVS to differentiate its offerings and demonstrate unique value to remain attractive
- **Adverse political and policy environment:** International volunteering can be hindered by government policies and political trends. Strict visa regimes and travel restrictions (sometimes tightened due to concerns about illegal migration) make cross-border volunteer exchanges more difficult. Additionally, rising nationalism or political extremism in some countries can create a less welcoming climate for international cooperation. Such external factors can limit where and how IVS operates, regardless of its internal strengths
- **Global crises and uncertainty:** Large-scale crises pose ongoing threats to IVS’s activities. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, demonstrated how a global health crisis can halt travel and in-person projects. Similarly, climate change and natural disasters may disrupt communities where IVS works, while wars or armed conflicts can suddenly make regions inaccessible or unsafe. In addition, deteriorating economic conditions or instability worldwide can reduce volunteer participation and support. These unpredictable events require IVS to remain highly adaptable and prepared for rapid changes in its operating environment



DAY 2 – 8 APRIL

**LOOKING FORWARD –
FUTURES & FORESIGHT**



Co-funded by
the European Union



2.1 SHAPING THE FUTURE OF IVS: POLICY, ADVOCACY, SOCIAL AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

The first session was presented by an expert panel comprising four presenters, each discussing one of the following topics:

- Policy trends affecting IVS (EU & UN perspectives), presented by **Gabriella Civico, Director, Centre for European Volunteering (CEV)**
- How can IVS influence funding and institutional priorities? Presented by **Barbara Eglitis, European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre**
- Linking IVS to climate justice, decolonisation and inclusion efforts, presented by **Helene Perold, Independent Social Research Consultant (South Africa)**
- Green Colonialism and Climate Justice in IVS, presented by **Patrick Okoyo Awino, Communication specialist, Senior Hansard Report, CAK (Kenya)**

Gabriella outlined evolving policy trends for international voluntary service (IVS) at EU and UN levels. She noted the growth of “voluntourism” via commercial platforms like Airbnb and Booking.com, the shift from role-based to task-based volunteering, and greater precarity in young people’s lives that drives last-minute, short-term engagement. She addressed the question of how AI can be used in volunteer placement and volunteer management, and how predictive analytics can help get a better understanding of social needs, and how many volunteers are needed where and for what. She also cautioned against the overuse of AI, at how biases and disinformation could creep into our work, and how it may radically change the role of volunteers. She highlighted confusion in legal frameworks between traineeships and volunteering, advocated linking IVS impact to the SDGs via tools like the VCal digital platform, and urged partnerships that reconcile intercultural learning with the EU Green Deal and decolonisation agendas.

“So no longer are people volunteering for the role to be the youth leader to be the football coach, to be the manager of the park/the green spaces, but people are rather volunteering for a task. So they will volunteer to coach the kids at football, but not to be the coach. ...

And the shift to this task-based approach actually lends itself to international voluntary service setups, work camps and such likewhere there's not really this hierarchy of roles. There's rather the list of tasks and the collaborative nature of doing tasks together.”

“They're not sure where they will be living, what job they will have, what's their employment situation.”

Barbara examined how IVS actors can influence funding and institutional priorities, especially within the European Solidarity Corps. She stressed the importance of targeted advocacy: researching which EU departments own which youth or green agendas, feeding concrete evidence via stakeholder consultations and surveys, and networking through national authorities to amplify the sector's voice. She called for clear definitions of "flexible funding," showcased organisational support costs alongside volunteer outcomes, and urged defenders of volunteering to link it to EU strategic priorities (democracy, security, competitiveness) to secure long-term funding.

Helene focused on decolonisation, stressing that true localisation in IVS means shifting leadership, funding decisions, and knowledge-production to Southern partners. She warned against persistent Northern distrust - rooted in racist myths about capacity - and its habit of channeling funds through European intermediaries. She urged co-creation of projects from design through evaluation, direct funding of core costs for local organisations, and strengthening civil society networks, so that IVS becomes a genuinely reciprocal exchange rather than a neo-colonial imprint.

Patrick defined "green colonialism" in IVS as imposing Western conservation models without local consent, which risks land-grabs (e.g. the Rusinga Island evictions for Lake Bunyonyi, 2010 ruling), displacement of pastoralist communities, and extractive carbon-offset projects. He identified key risks - paternalism, lack of community input, short-termism, resource exploitation - and proposed advocacy strategies: raising volunteer awareness via case studies, lobbying for enforceable equitable conservation policies, supporting grassroots land-rights movements, promoting community-led ecotourism revenue sharing, and instituting rigorous participatory monitoring to safeguard climate justice in IVS.

In response to these presentations, the Q&A discussion raised four key issues:

1. Proving and measuring social impact

Panelists agreed it's difficult, but feasible, to measure impact if it is approached systematically. First, establish clear baseline indicators before volunteers arrive. Then use a "360°" approach - gather data from three key stakeholder groups (the organisation, the volunteers, and members of the local community) at baseline, mid-point and end-point. Keep it simple: choose two or three metrics you can reliably track (e.g. hours served, number of people reached, self-reported change in community well-being) rather than dozens you can't manage. Tools like the VCal digital platform enable organisations to input programme parameters and to log volunteer hours and perceived impacts, aligning outputs to SDGs for comparability

2. Online/virtual vs. cross-border or community-based volunteering

Virtual volunteering is task-focused (e.g. translating documents, analysing drone or satellite imagery) and can reach huge numbers of people—especially in crises or for digital heritage projects—but it lacks the immersive, intercultural, human-connection aspects of in-person service

It often requires just as much (or more) staff time to onboard, mentor and sustain engagement, and depends on reliable internet availability. By contrast, cross-border/community-based volunteering embeds volunteers in a new environment, fosters deeper cultural exchange, tackles loneliness through face-to-face interaction, and builds local relationships that virtual modes can't replicate

3. Intergenerational volunteering

Although 'intergenerational fairness' has recently gained policy attention (e.g. the appointment of an EU Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness), mixing ages in volunteering is nothing new. Whether in international camps or local programmes - senior volunteers mentoring youth, youth supporting older adults in care homes, or multi-age teams in schools - intergenerational exchange has always been built into IVS. What's new is the opportunity to highlight and fund it deliberately, and to revisit past 50+ EU schemes (like the Kontiki programme) that specifically engaged older volunteers

4. Racism in IVS

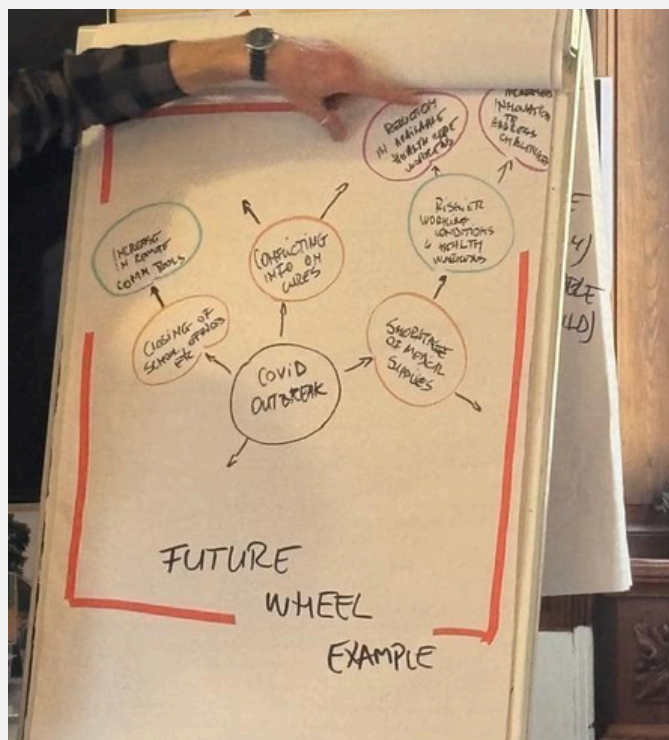
Speakers identified a persisting colonial mindset that underrates local capacities in the Global South, seeing African communities as perpetually 'in need' and untrustworthy with funds, despite 60–70 years of independence. This distrust channels resources through European intermediaries, reinforces neocolonial power imbalances, and fuels racist narratives that must be actively challenged through genuine partnerships, shared leadership and by showcasing local expertise

2.2 IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE FUTURES FOR IVS

In the next session Bogdan gave a short introduction to the Futures and Foresight methodologies which explore the 7 Dimensions of the Future, using key concepts such:

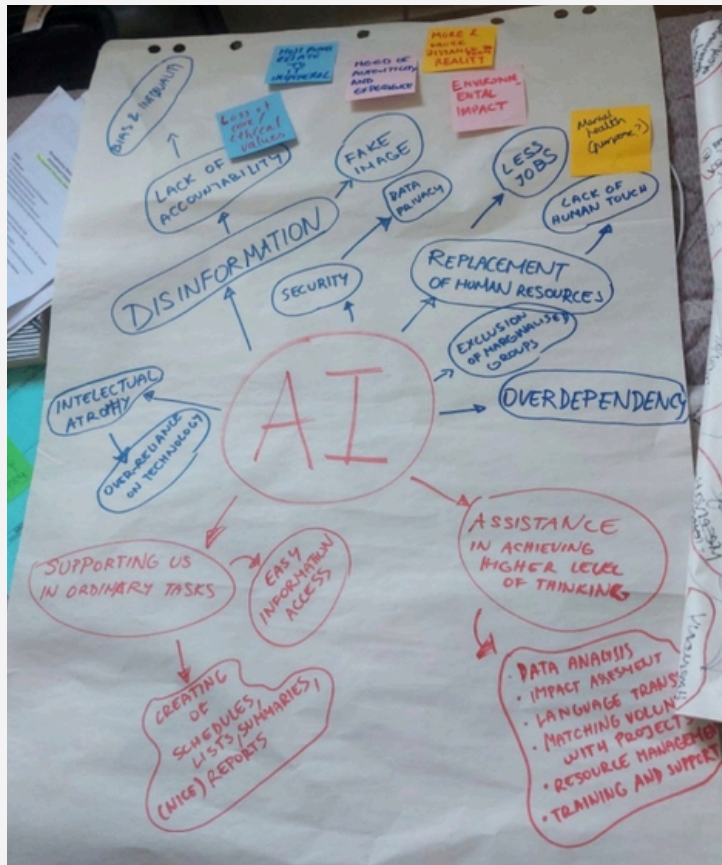
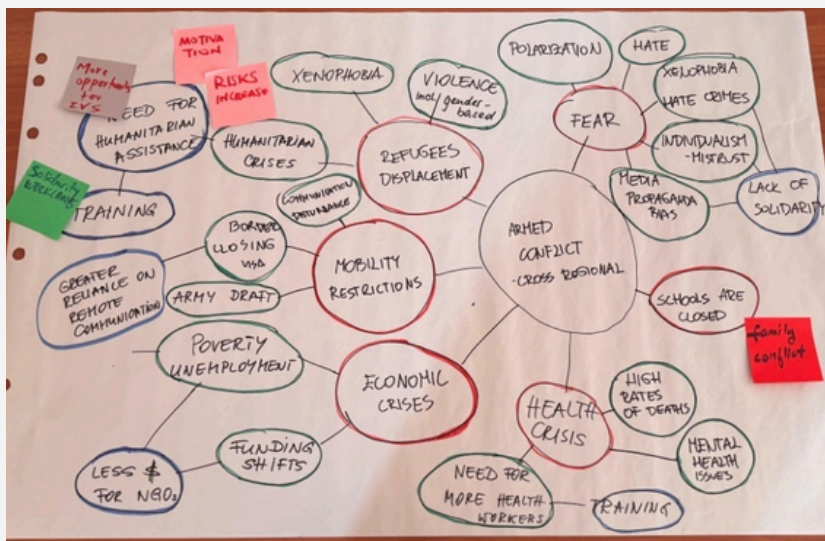
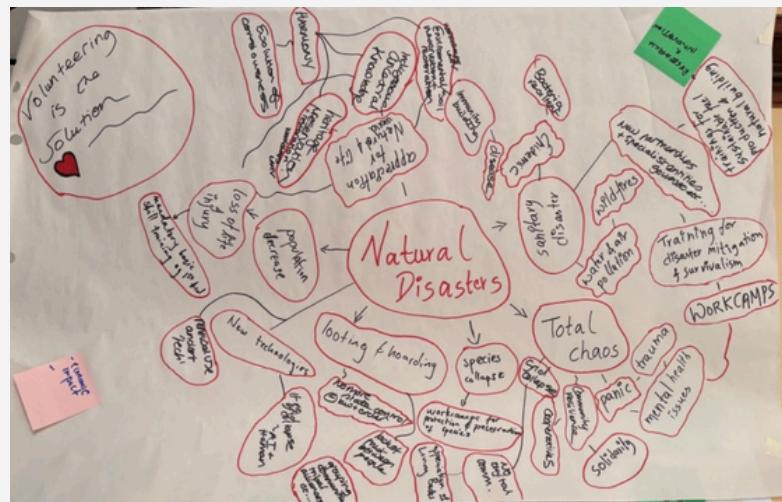
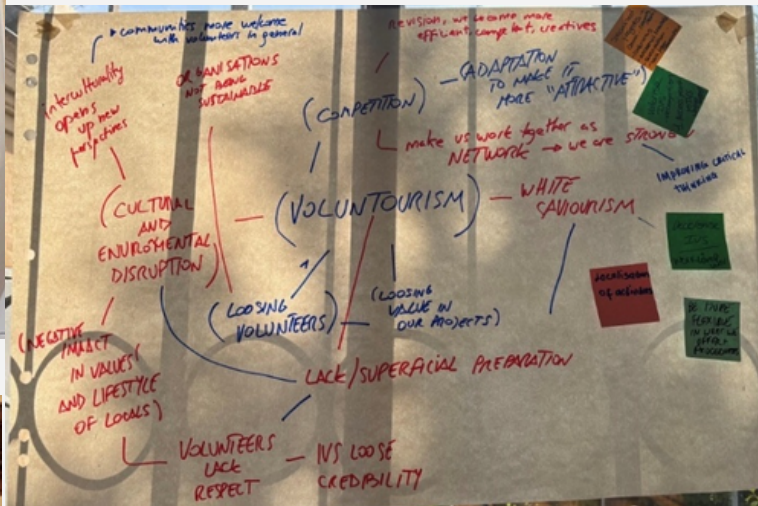
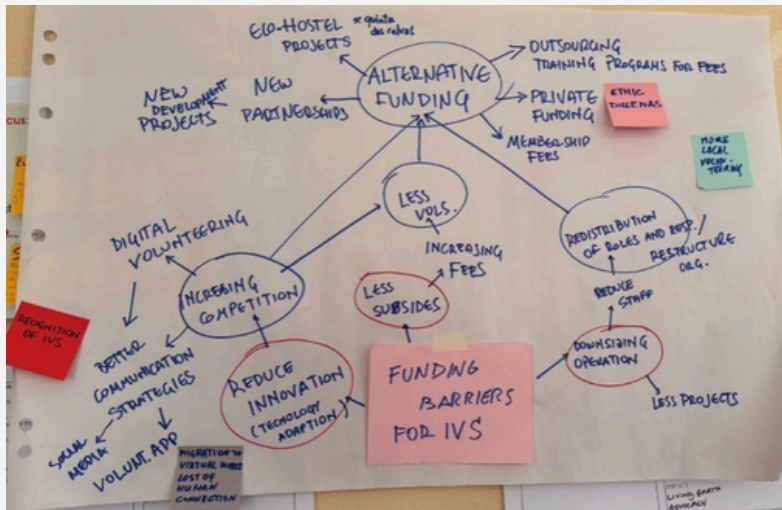
- What is **Possible** (might - what might happen?)
- What is **Plausible** (could - what could happen?)
- What is **Probable** (likely - what is likely to happen?)
- What is **Preferable** (should - what should happen?)

In using the methodology to explore possible futures for IVS, Bogdan stressed the importance of bold and creative long-term thinking.



2.2.1 What are the likely key drivers of change in IVS?

The first part of the exercise got participants completing a Futures Wheel, identifying a key driver/trigger/trend, and mapping out the first, second and third-order consequences of the trend. This process generated a number of drivers that could affect IVS going forward: Voluntourism; funding (reduced and funding barriers); natural disasters; conflict; and AI.



2.2.2 Envisioning IVS future scenarios

The next part of the process was a visioning exercise to imagine IVS in 2035. In plenary the participants decided to focus on four out of the five drivers identified in the previous exercise: Natural disasters; funding; voluntourism; and AI. Working in two groups, the participants built IVS future scenarios using a 2x2 Matrix approach and connected them to the advocacy proposals.

AI and Voluntourism - 2x2 matrix scenarios

High AI

This scenario focuses on equipping staff with the skills to use AI to further the mission and values of IVS. A key milestone is securing an expert to provide training, with success measured by how many people receive training on ethical AI use and its promotion in networks.

Low Volunteerism / Low AI

This scenario emphasises the internal development and improvement of tools to support operations. The goal is to harmonise systems across organisations, improving efficiency and consistency. Indicators include tool completion, staff efficiency, and organisational adoption rates.

High Human / Community Touch / Connection

This scenario prioritises human connection and local engagement through national and international meetings and shared experiences. Stakeholders include local communities, volunteers, and IVS organisations. Success is measured by the number of projects, community involvement, and the integration of decolonised approaches to AI.

High Volunteerism

This scenario emphasises the consistent promotion of IVS values in collaboration with institutions. The focus is on increasing the number of volunteers, institutional partnerships, and active projects.



Natural Disasters & Funding – 2x2 matrix scenarios

More funding – more natural disasters

With increased funding amid a rise in natural disasters, in this scenario communities and national volunteers are highly prepared for disaster response. There is a strong emphasis on environmental restoration, sustainable food production, and access to essential materials. Training incorporates both ancestral knowledge and modern technology, fostering a dual approach to education. These conditions create opportunities for developing robust community survival skills, as well as improved disaster adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Less funding – more natural disasters

In a context of limited funding and frequent natural disasters, resilience in this scenario stems from community and volunteer engagement grounded in ancestral practices and low-tech solutions. Increased migration and the establishment of new partnerships with specialised agencies highlight the need for strategic re-evaluation. Volunteers coordinate efforts based on local environmental needs, forming a non-monetary economy supported by grassroots fundraising efforts such as GoFundMe. Recognition grows from hands-on action, leading to long-term skill-sharing and post-disaster learning.

More funding – fewer natural disasters

With more funding and fewer disasters in this scenario, organisations can prioritise capacity-building through training and volunteer opportunities. This calm context allows for long-term strategic planning with targeted high-impact initiatives. Volunteers are formally recognised in national emergency plans and take on implementation roles during crises. The role of IVS and volunteers becomes central to environmental protection and disaster mitigation strategies.

Less funding – fewer natural disasters

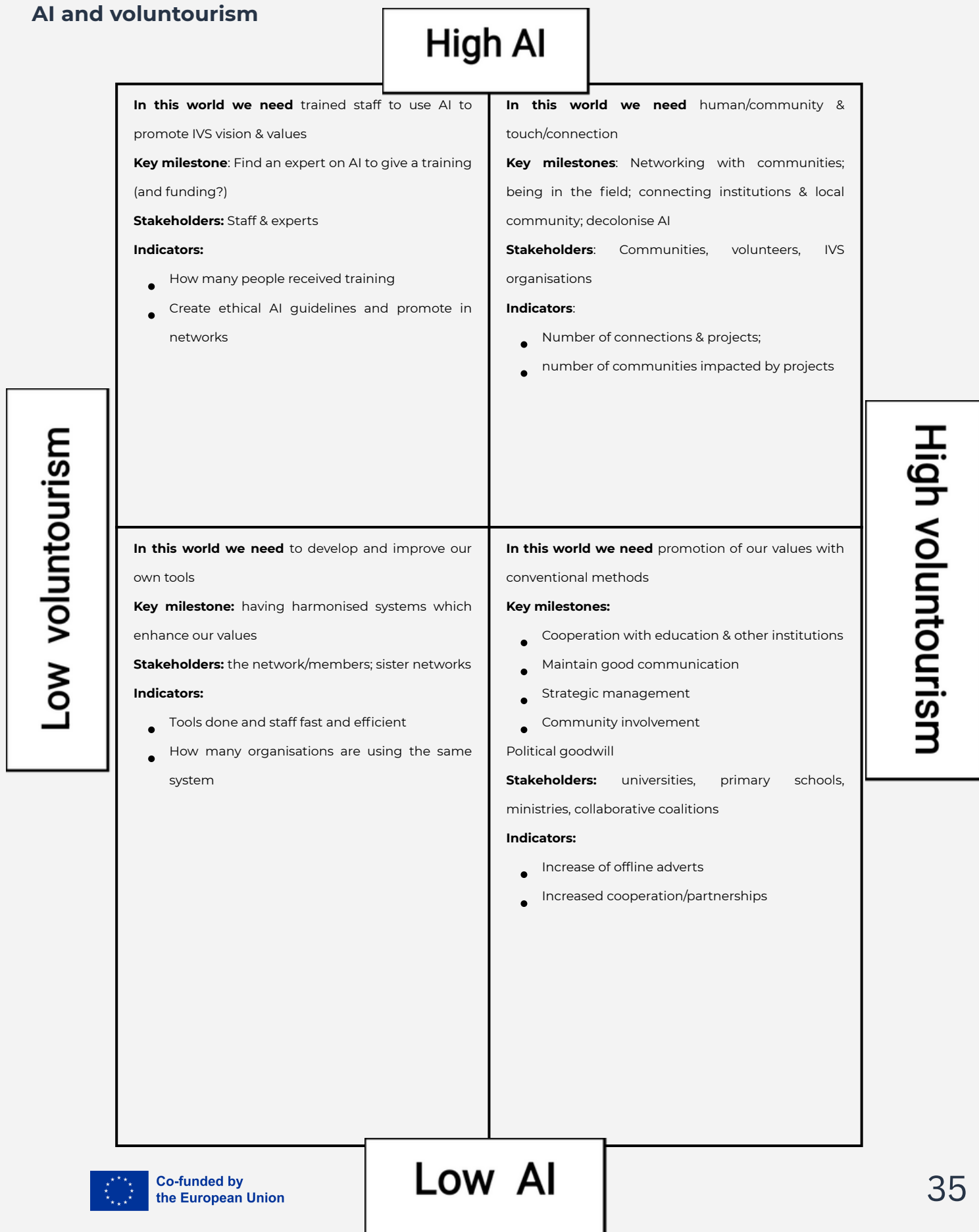
In this scenario, when both funding and disasters are limited, the focus shifts to future preparedness. Communities and organisations seek alternative funding sources, restructure responsibilities, and build strategic partnerships across sectors. Emphasis is placed on developing reserves and implementing emergency preparedness and safety strategies to ensure long-term resilience.



2.2.3 Translating vision into action

Having shared the outcomes of the previous exercise, participants again worked in groups to identify key milestones, stakeholders and success indicators for each of the future scenarios they had crafted.

AI and voluntourism



<p>Local & international volunteers provide hands-on action, post-disaster, for long-term impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They are not specialised; they learn by doing and share their skills. ● They can also support by finding funding (e.g. Gofundme). ● This could lead to recognition & could eventually alleviate funding barriers. <p>Key milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Successfully recruit local and international volunteer groups ● Partnerships with other operating sectors (emergency relief; government agencies; first responders) ● Understanding the needs & what is required. <p>Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Place/people/community ● Operating sectors ● Volunteers ● Experts in climate mitigation & adaptation ● Funders <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No of established partnerships ● No of volunteers ● No of successful trainings ● No of funds raised ● No of successful projects implemented 	<p>Provide training for members, local communities & volunteers in low-tech ancestral knowledge / adaptation and mitigation.</p> <p>Key milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop training programme ● Find the funding ● Local traditional training methods <p>Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members of the IVS movement ● Experts in the field (locally) ● Local people / local communities <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No of people trained & identified ● No of volunteers ● No of successful trainings ● No of funds raised ● No of projects organized ● No of communities involve
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A comparison between the two sets of proposals reveals interesting similarities and differences. Both the AI/voluntourism and the natural disasters/funding proposals are underpinned by a strong commitment to the IVS values of community-based action, learning by doing, and partnerships with other agencies, both governmental and non-governmental.

For example, the Low AI/Voluntourism scenario prioritises human connection, traditional knowledge, grassroots action and building resilience through local knowledge. Similarly the Natural Disasters/Funding scenario is focused on local (and international) volunteer engagement in disaster response, not as specialists but by providing hands-on support and learning through action; in this way the scenario envisages long-term impact through capacity building and skill-sharing. In other words, both these proposals aim for resilience through community empowerment, inclusive participation and low-tech adaptation.

By contrast, the High IA/Voluntourism scenario emphasises technological integration and system optimisation, while focusing on efficiency and strategic visibility. It is also likely to be scalable, but reliant on expertise and funding. What prevents this approach from becoming corporatised is the drive to align AI with ethical values and decolonise its use.

Strategic partnerships are another feature of both sets of proposals. The High AI/Voluntourism scenario envisages partnerships with educational and government institutions that can supply expertise and, presumably, funding.

The Low AI/Voluntourism and the Natural Disasters/Funding scenarios envisage partnerships with local experts (e.g. emergency relief agencies) as well as community leaders and first responders, but also with government bodies. In other words, these two scenarios are grounded in grassroots empowerment, community resilience and adaptability. In this way they are likely to be more inclusive, but less driven by technology.

2.3 REFLECTION

At the end of the day, Helene was asked to share her observations about the outcomes of the day's panel inputs and group discussions. Her reflections and questions were as follows:

- CCIVS is resilient, has long-standing experience and represents a set of values that are supportive of the struggle for equity, human rights and social justice (to name a few). In this regard it is distinctly different from the large IVS sending organisations run on behalf of Northern governments [e.g. France Volontaires, Weltwaerts, VSO (as it was previously), Peace Corps (USA) and Australia's Volunteer Program (AVP)] or run by foundations such as the Singapore International Foundation, etc..

- But is there a risk that CCIVS is inwardly-focused within its historical paradigm? If so, could this risk it being isolated or marginalised, making it difficult to explore new partnerships and opportunities that might help the organisation retain its resilience and support its drive for influence and innovation in the IVS sector?
- How does the DNA of IVS - anti-racism, relational development, non-formal learning - translate into programming in an increasingly insecure global environment wracked by growing nationalism, conflict, dispossession, youth alienation, technology-driven communication, shrinking civil society space, etc?
- What does this imply for the relationship between reciprocity and mutual learning between CCIVS' European base and members in other parts of the world? Can this be sustained, and if so how?

Following these remarks, participants offered the following responses:

Adli Daana (PCMRD) pointed out that CCIVS empowers its members: it is not a technological network, but a political, activist network. It is not a private enterprise with lots of resources that can compete with the private sector. It's a non-profit and it's hard to find funds outside its world. CCIVS needs to diversify its funding and look for funds outside the EU to be able to adapt and use new methods and communications. It's very hard for non-profits to be sustainable and shrinking space means non-profits are being pushed into the corner. Despite this, CCIVS has managed to sustain the network – it feels like a big family and is open to critical and supportive ideas. People can leave the network if they don't agree with it. Due to financial resources we can be where we want to be. These amazing (future and foresight) ideas are very ambitious and we're doing well with our current resources. CCIVS is flexible, and if it had the necessary funds, it would deploy volunteers in disaster areas. It's exhausting to sustain this with such diverse partnerships and members around the world, which makes it difficult to get where we want to be.

Aleksandr Kurushev (ESTYES) commented that fragmentation undermines efforts to work together. In Estonia they have had lots of applications from young people – why? They want to travel, stay with a family and interact. There are lots of projects in Europe and they're full.

Silja Fischer (IMC) pointed out that the International Music Council (IMC) is a like-minded organisation and would share its values and advocacy strategies with the group later in the week when she facilitated the advocacy session.





DAY 3 – 9 APRIL

**STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENT –**

**BRIDGING PRESENT
& FUTURE**



Co-funded by
the European Union

The objective of Day 3 was to set strategic priorities linking current realities with future IVS challenges.



3.1 DEFINING KEY PRIORITIES FOR IVS ADVOCACY

This session started by reflecting on the 5 Advocacy Asks as captured in the matrix below and groups considered these in relation to the question: **Where should IVS focus?**

	Advocacy Area	Core Message	Key Asks
1	Recognition of International Voluntary Service	IVS is crucial for peace, resilience, and sustainable development.	Policy frameworks, skill certification, integration into national agendas
2	Cross border opportunities in International Voluntary Service	Fair mobility access for global volunteer participation.	Transparent visa info, official training, embassy access
3	Climate Action Through International Voluntary Service	Community-led climate action for ecological resilience.	Funding for climate projects, alignment with UN environmental frameworks
4	Equitable Funding for International Voluntary Service Projects	Inclusive funding mechanisms prioritises community-led projects.	Decolonise decision-making, global exchanges, simplified funding and reporting requirements
5	Human Rights and Justice in International Voluntary Service	Safe, discrimination-free, and inclusive IVS participation for all, addressing gender-based violence and ensuring support for youth in conflict and post-conflict areas.	Policies for safety, security in conflict zones, prevention of gender-based violence, equal access, and protection for marginalised communities.

In discussion, a number of suggestions were made about the issues that have become increasingly pressing in the environment in which IVS functions. These include concerns about mental health, the vulnerability of young people searching for jobs, the question of ethics in the increased use of AI, the erosion of freedom of expression (which could perhaps be included under the human rights Ask), war, geopolitical conflicts, as well as natural disasters. If these could be prioritised and added into the Advocacy Asks it would be easier to write policy papers to better prepare ourselves and come up with better solutions.

It was also suggested that in terms of **formal recognition**, CCIVS should ideally be recognised in various regions and that perhaps the EC members from different regions could represent each region more actively. It wasn't clear, however, whether this could be achieved in all regions.

It was noted that the 5th Ask, about human rights, is a catch-all category that needs to be refined because in its present form it is too wide.

Task: Participants were then divided into three groups, each of which was allocated one of three IVS priorities:

- Natural disasters
- Funding barriers
- AI and voluntourism

The groups were asked to reflect on the priorities against the Five Advocacy Asks (recognition, cross-border opportunities, climate action, equitable funding, human rights and justice) and to look at the priorities through the lens of the scenario planning exercises done on Day 2, using the high-impact vs low-impact framework.

The outcomes of this process are captured in the table below.

THREE PRIORITIES IN RELATION TO THE FIVE ADVOCACY ASKS AND FUTURES SCENARIOS

Asks	Kind of response	Roles
NATURAL DISASTERS		
Recognition	Recognition of the skills of volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impacts of the volunteer work in the natural disaster response • The separation of the first response and long-term post-disaster support i.e. reconstruction, ecosystem restoration
Cross-border Opportunities	Fast-track natural disaster volunteer visa	Active approach
Climate action	Community-led climate action for ecological resilience	Environmental restoration
Equitable funding	Solidarity funds for natural disaster response	Regenerative funding
Human rights & justice	Coordination with multiple organisations to ensure discrimination-free natural disaster response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting basic needs in natural disaster area • Advocating the impacts of the natural disaster on other areas e.g. gender-based violence.

Asks	Kind of response	Roles
FUNDING BARRIERS		
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official recognition from other national & international bodies • Identify which bodies are we going to apply from youth & education depts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific role in work of youth work action • Ease or alleviate funding challenges
Cross-border Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free access to cross-border volunteering operation & mobilities • Subsidies from national govts for volunteer activities 	Give visibility for regional cross-border funding opportunities (regional collaboration)
Climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research based, professional proposal submission • Climate education: getting young people active in education, schools, academic for communities 	Ability to fully implement climate action projects
Equitable funding	Development agencies should match in terms of capacity & implementation to IVS movements	Look for other funding (ethical to IVS) e.g. BRICS, G7, ASEAN, UN, UNESCO, AU
Human rights & justice	Operational challenges in terms of implementation projects in IVS	Look for funding from human rights organisations & associations working on social justice
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE		
Recognition	Local, national & international recognition needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for recognition of voluntourism as just business • 'Expose' their vs our practices
Cross-border Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visa issues affecting our mobility • Local & international support when it comes to visa issues 	More awareness on this matter e.g. caravan camp, music, voices for change
Climate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntourism camp to develop policy papers related to climate action • Voluntourism camp for research to establish the position we have about the impact of AI on climate action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nice Climate Institute with the participation of university students • Multi-disciplinary approach from social science, environmental & political studies, development studies etc using AI tools
Equitable funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntourism camp to develop a system to find funding from all over the world using AI to automatically send the info to the organisation involved • Use AI system to find diverse sources of funding (law & regulation) 	Nice Financial Institute with the participation of university students specialised in resource mobilisation, financial management, IT, law.
AI	Impact of AI in sending the information about IVS	Come up with data that would be uploaded to support our cause.

At the end of the morning session, in order for the GRM to inform its discussions about advocacy the next day, Helene presented the following research-based insights on structural barriers to IVS recognition.

Structural barriers to IVS recognition

- Recognition of volunteering is facilitated by an environment that values and supports different types of volunteering – organised, less formalised, community-based, cross-border and transnational, among others
- Too often volunteer organisations are seen as the delivery mechanisms for specific outcomes e.g. achieving the SDGs, rather than volunteers being involved in civic engagement and advocacy for a host of local, national, regional or global concerns
- Barrier: diminishing value and support for civic spaces: In the present context the extent to which civil society space is shrinking represents a major barrier to the recognition and support of IVS, but at this time the need for volunteering for solidarity and locally-driven development has never been greater
- There is a need for inclusive policies to support local volunteerism with a special focus on vulnerable groups
- Build incentives for participation whilst providing protection and safety guarantees for volunteers
- Lack of recognition for the value of volunteering and the contribution of volunteers remains an issue that requires a strong advocacy response. Eg. while the Volunteer Groups Alliance brings together 80 organisations and networks, this is focused on influencing UN member states. There is scope for volunteering networks to engage in a wider advocacy strategy with the aim of securing greater awareness of IVS to encourage increased investment in this field
- CCIVS offers volunteers the opportunity to participate in sustainable development driven by community needs and ownership. The key here is that reciprocal partnerships between international organisations and local communities are the foundation for solidarity and progress and create opportunities for mutual learning between IVs and local partner organisations
- The persistent difficulty of achieving reciprocity in travel of volunteers from the Global South to the Global North and other countries represents an ongoing constraint for IVS
- Is there a risk of CCIVS being isolated? The drive for partnerships with universities and other institutions to build the knowledge base around IVS and locally-led programmes is an important factor in creating greater awareness of its work



DAY 4 – 10 APRIL

IVS ADVOCACY & POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

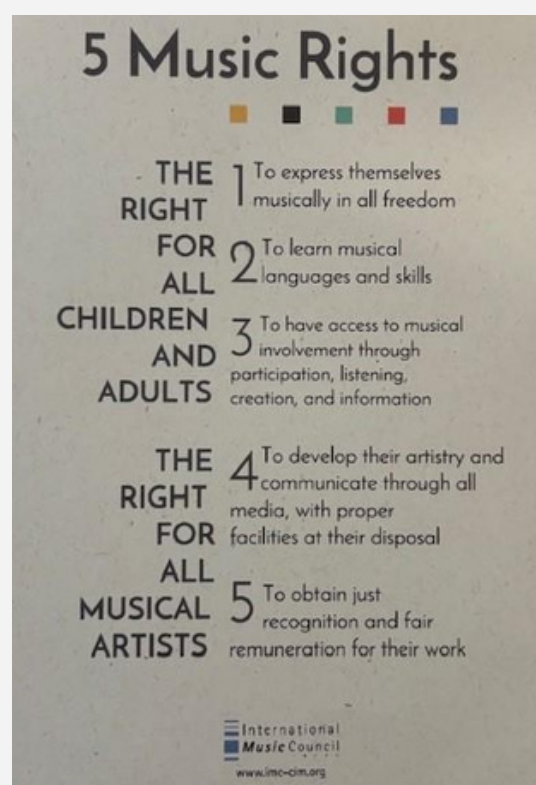
The day was facilitated primarily by Silja Fischer from the International Music Council, supported by Bogdan and Helene. The objective was to strengthen IVS's policy impact through advocacy & partnerships.



4.1 ADVOCACY TRAINING

Silja Fischer (IMC) introduced the group to how the International Music Council (IMC) leverages its "Five Music Rights" framework as a tool for advocacy and engagement in international policy-making spaces such as UNESCO and the UN. Founded by UNESCO, the IMC is the largest global network dedicated to promoting music rights. Through strategic use of this framework, IMC advocates for music access, education, creation, performance, and fair remuneration for artists, remaining inclusive across musical genres and free from religious, ideological, or political bias.

She highlighted various advocacy actions, including monitoring policy developments, submitting statements, participating in consultations, replying to surveys, and collaborating with partners across cultural sectors. IMC targets a wide range of international organizations like UNESCO, UNDP, WIPO, ILO, UNFCCC, and regional bodies such as the EU, AU, and ASEAN. Notably, public mobilisation efforts prioritise local events, partnerships with like-minded groups, online engagement, and media outreach rather than expecting government bodies to directly represent artists' interests. The IMC also celebrates advocacy through initiatives like the Music Rights Awards, which recognise projects (rather than individuals) that advance music rights. Stories of Music Rights Champions from diverse backgrounds—ranging from an Afghan advocate to a nearly deaf Scottish percussionist—demonstrate the transformative power of music in contexts of resilience, peace, and mental health.



Discussions during the session touched on complex issues, such as whether music that incites hate can be penalised under the rights framework, with a consensus leaning toward positive reinforcement rather than censorship.

Ultimately, the IMC is positioned as a value-driven, networked organisation that actively implements and supports actions adhering to its music rights principles. Its mission is clear: to foster a world where everyone can access, create, and express themselves through music, with artists' rights fully respected and protected.

4.1.1 Applying IMC approach to Advocacy Asks

Participants were divided into smaller groups, each considering the following three questions in relation to a specific IVS Advocacy Ask:

- How do the 5 Music Rights relate to the 5 IVS Advocacy Asks?
- What lessons can IVS take from the IMCs approach to lobbying and policy engagement?
- What are the key UNESCO, UN and EU spaces that IVS should be present in?

The outcomes of those discussions were as follows:

Advocacy Ask 1 - Recognition

- Operating with other accredited organisations and forming 'strategic alliances' which will aid IVS in obtaining recognition
- Inclusivity, Participation, Accessibility
- To raise awareness on recognition of IVS using ethical and alternative media platforms

Advocacy Ask 2 - Cross-border Opportunities

- Accessibility for all people to get equal opportunities
- Intercultural learning, adaptation and understanding each other's culture
- Educating the embassies, especially the visa issuing authorities. through workshops, training, etc.
- Strategic Plan related to IVS Advocacy
- Regional Economic Group representation from IVS
- Strategic collaborations with development partners related to advocacy
- Send annual reports to embassies and immigration offices within our countries of operation

Advocacy Ask 3 - Climate Action

- African Union volunteer linkage platform (NAVO), Volunteer groups Alliance (UN-SDGS), NGO UNESCO liaison committee, UNESCO Youth Climate Action Network (in-progress), IAVE/IVCO (Forum), ASEF, COE, Youth Forum Jeunesse (YFJ)
- Possibility – UNESCO: 2005 convention, education, culture - WHC, IVS Movements (CCIVS umbrella - networks - ICYE, SCI, IBO, ALLIANCE) and sister networks - NVDA, NAVO

Advocacy Ask 4 - Equitable Funding

- Connection to the 5 Music Rights (recognition), base for funding
- Inspiration from work with international institutions, participations, platforms

Advocacy Ask 5 - Human Rights & Justice

- 5 Music Rights relations: Recognition
- To expand Advocacy works beyond Europe (ASEAN, ECOWAS, SADC)
- To the National delegations
- UNESCO & spaces - UNV, UNFP, UNDP etc...

In plenary discussion, the key takeaways from the morning session were as follows:

- Participants acknowledged that while challenges are known, the focus must now shift toward concrete actions and solutions
- Some frustration was expressed regarding the difficulty of changing systemic problems, especially in areas like climate action
- Education is a cross-cutting theme and should be prioritised across all advocacy strategies
- Participants identified similar obstacles, emphasising the need to harmonise actions while respecting different contexts
- There is a need to establish a stronger, more coherent CCIVS identity to enhance global recognition and internal cohesion

4.1.2 Identifying Recognition and Funding stakeholders

Working in groups again, participants were asked to identify the stakeholders that needed to be engaged in relation to Advocacy Ask 1 – Recognition, and Advocacy Ask 4 – Equitable Funding, and to mention them by name as far as possible. Participants identified international, national and local stakeholders, as is shown in these lists.

An analysis of the lists shows a number of interesting trends in the Recognition and the Funding stakeholders suggested by the groups.

Recognition stakeholder trends

There is a strong reliance on public institutions.

Government ministries (Youth, Foreign Affairs, Culture) and municipal bodies are central to volunteer recognition, highlighting a top-down structure

Youth-focused regional and international Bodies. Many regional and international recognition actors are youth-centered, tying volunteerism closely to youth empowerment initiatives

Collaborative and network-based recognition.

Recognition involves collaboration among NGOs, UN platforms, and advisory councils, emphasizing partnership-based acknowledgment

Practical barriers to recognition highlighted.

Visa and passport issues are prominent, indicating mobility as a practical challenge for volunteer recognition across borders

Recognition Stakeholder Trends



Public Sector Dominance

Government ministries and municipalities are key recognizers



Youth-Centric Focus

Regional and international programs prioritize youth volunteer recognition



Collaboration Networks

Cross-NGO and institutional partnerships support recognition



Mobility and Practical Barriers

Passport and visa challenges are critical bottlenecks to recognition



Minimal Private Sector Role

Businesses are largely absent from volunteer recognition mechanisms



Education System Involvement

Schools and universities are primary actors in local volunteer recognition

Lack of private sector engagement. The private sector plays little to no role in formal volunteer recognition, unlike its strong role in funding activities.

Education sector as a key local actor. Universities and schools are essential in recognising volunteer contributions, promoting volunteering from an early age.

Funding stakeholder trends

Funding Stakeholder Trends



Institutional Dominance Internationally

Heavy reliance on government/multilateral agencies



Diversified Funding Nationally and Locally

Mix of government, private sector, individuals



Growing Role of Corporate and Private Donors

Especially at local and national levels



Increasing Grassroots Engagement

Shift to community-driven and smaller sources



North-South Asymmetry Persists

Limited South-South funding visibility

Heavy reliance on public and multilateral institutions. At the international and regional levels, stakeholders are mainly UN agencies, government development agencies, multilateral funds, and embassies. Funding and partnerships are shaped largely by formal, institutional sources with limited private sector engagement

Greater diversification at local and national levels. Local and national lists show a more varied funding landscape that blends public, private, and individual support sources. There is a clear shift towards pluralistic funding models, combining governmental support, corporate sponsorship, private donors, crowdfunding, and foundations

Rise of private sector and corporate actors. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and private philanthropy are increasingly important at the national and local levels, with organisations like Infosys Fund, TATA Trusts, and local companies playing major roles

Emerging grassroots and community-oriented approaches. There is stronger recognition of grassroots and community-driven funding sources, including local authorities, municipalities, local hosts, and individual donors. This reflects a shift towards more community-based resource mobilisation

Limited South-South and regional South collaboration. Despite the presence of some regional bodies (e.g., ASEAN, AU), Global South-led funding remains limited compared to Global North sources. This reveals continued asymmetries in funding power and influence



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Insights from Recognition and Funding stakeholder trends

Comparison between the Recognition and Funding stakeholders



Stakeholders	Recognition	Funding
International	Strong focus on volunteering and youth engagement platforms (UNV, FORUM, ILO, Red Cross)	Strong focus on funding bodies (UN agencies, Embassies, Development Foundations)
Regional	Regional volunteer collaboration bodies (ECOWAS, CAN/ MERCOSUR, SADC Youth Divisions)	Regional funding and project agencies (EU, AU, ASEAN, Regional Foundations)
National	Volunteer recognition structures (National Volunteer Councils, Ministries of Youth)	Ministries (Youth, Development, EU Affairs) and private sector donors (TATA, Infosys)
Local	Universities, municipalities, volunteer platforms for recognition and validation	County governments, private donors, local companies, individuals for funding
	Strong focus on volunteering and youth engagement platforms (UNV, FORUM, ILO, Red Cross)	Strong focus on funding bodies (UN agencies, Embassies, Development Foundations)

When we compare the two lists of stakeholders, the comparison suggests that the stakeholders are likely to play different roles in IVS:

- **International institutions** serve dual functions: International organisations (UN, EU bodies, ASEF) appear both as funders and recognisers of volunteerism
- **Regional focus:** Funding vs coordination: Regional bodies fund projects (EU, AU), but also coordinate volunteer programmes (ECOWAS, CAN/MERCOSUR)
- **National government ministries are central:** Ministries manage both funding and volunteer recognition, but focus differently – development vs youth support
- **Strong local-level engagement:** Both lists of stakeholders highlight local engagement through municipalities, universities, community centers, and local NGOs
- **Private section has a funding role, not a recognition role:** According to these lists Corporates are major funders, but are less active in volunteer recognition structures

4.2 STRENGTHENING THE IVS POLICY ROLE

This session involved participants in a Policy Debate entitled “IVS in Global Frameworks”. The scenario: An international meeting to discuss IVS recognition.

Participants were divided into 3 groups:

- IVS practitioners advocating for more recognition
- Government policymakers setting volunteering policies
- Funders & donors deciding where to allocate resources

The groups prepared their arguments for 5 minutes, and then two members from each group engaged in the debate.

4.2.1 Summary of the debate

During the pitch session, representatives from IVS organisations presented their case to policy makers and funders, seeking greater recognition for the educational and societal value of their volunteer programmes. They emphasised that IVS initiatives provide hands-on, transformative learning experiences for young people and contribute significantly to local and global issues such as environmental restoration, cultural heritage preservation, and peace-building. IVS practitioners argued that their work complements formal education and develops skills that are not typically gained through traditional university systems.

The policy makers responded with scepticism about the measurable local impact and raised concerns about accreditation, cultural sensitivities, and the capacity for integrating short-term volunteer work into recognised education systems. They highlighted the challenges of formally accrediting non-formal education experiences and stressed the importance of respecting local cultures when hosting international volunteers. IVS representatives proposed solutions such as linking volunteer experiences to university credits and demonstrating the positive cultural exchange benefits.

The funders outlined their priority areas — human rights, climate change, gender equality, peace, and digital innovation — and confirmed interest provided that IVS activities could be clearly mapped to these themes. They emphasised the need for IVS to present streamlined proposals, including specific outcomes, concrete data, timelines, budgets, and examples of successful projects. Feedback from other participants reinforced the importance of precise, targeted messaging, recommending that IVS organisations refine their advocacy to match the priorities and capacities of different funding bodies and policy audiences.

Overall, while the IVS representatives made a passionate and value-driven case, the session revealed the critical need for stronger evidence, clearer objectives, and tailored communication strategies to secure both recognition and financial support.

4.3 FUTURE SCENARIOS FOR IVS POLICY & FUNDING

In this session participants worked in five groups to produce their dream scenarios in answer to this question: **What if IVS had a strong policy role?** What needs to be done and what is our journey?

Once again the force field analysis methodology was used to identify driving forces and barriers/restraining forces.

Driving forces (support stronger role)

Several strong driving forces support IVS in achieving a greater role in policy-making. These include synergy with other organizations and networks, shifting towards more liberal perspectives, and shared values across diverse organisations. Personal motivation and strong organisational identity (based on history and experience) are critical strengths. IVS benefits from a coordinated network, international reach, and sector expertise, as well as recognition from influential bodies like the EU, UNESCO, UNV, and UNHCR. Support from embassies and funding bodies further bolsters their position. Key themes include decolonisation efforts, strategic collaboration and partnerships, social media presence, and a commitment to global solidarity, youth mobility, structured operations, grassroots engagement, and the promotion of value-based guidelines and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Innovative projects, harmonised networks, impact measurement, and the ability to leverage a large, engaged membership are vital contributors to strengthening IVS's policy influence.

Restraining forces (limit stronger role)

At the same time, IVS faces notable restraining forces that hinder its policy influence. These include persistent colonial thinking, prejudice towards informal education, a broad and sometimes unfocused strategic approach, and intense competition within the civil society sector. Political shifts towards populism and far-right ideologies can clash with IVS values, as can internal challenges such as negative personal attitudes. Financial limitations, language barriers, and the diversity of contexts further complicate advocacy efforts. A lack of expertise in advocacy, inconsistent access to opportunities, and weak mapping of stakeholders and resources also present obstacles. External factors such as restrictive laws on mobility, national and local government barriers, natural disasters, pandemics, and shifting donor priorities exacerbate the challenges. Internally, fragmented communication, a lack of a common evaluation system, and insufficient funding for promising ideas hinder progress. To succeed, IVS must navigate these complex dynamics while reinforcing its strengths.



Stakeholders mentioned

- Council of Europe
- European Youth Forum
- EU (European Union)
- Red Cross
- Amnesty International
- Doctors Without Borders
- Human in Need
- Social Media platforms: TikTok, LinkedIn
- UNESCO
- UNV (United Nations Volunteers)
- UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)
- Universities: Northumbria, Ben Lowe, IMREDD
- French National Commission for UNESCO (Patrick)
- EYF (European Youth Foundation)

Reviewing these points during the plenary, participants added the following insights:

Driving forces

- Global network reach: IVS organisations have extensive, diverse international networks with access to grassroots communities
- High-quality capacity building: Professional trainers and over 100 educational resources strengthen local capacities
- Persistence and vision: IVS organisations show resilience and clarity in engagement with policymakers and funders
- Potential for stronger marketing and promotion: With enhanced resources, IVS can amplify visibility and influence

Restraining forces

- Low salary competitiveness: Difficulty retaining skilled personnel compared to the private sector
- Lack of statistical evidence: Proposals often lack robust, concrete data to convince stakeholders
- Generalised recognition requests: Vague advocacy goals weaken the strength of funding and policy requests
- Misalignment with audiences: Targeting the wrong institutions (e.g., ministries) dilutes advocacy impact



4.4 TRANSLATING ADVOCACY ASKS INTO TANGIBLE ACTIONS

Following these processes, participants reflected on the need to translate IVS Advocacy Asks into tangible actions at local, national, and international levels. They discussed how to connect broader policy goals to specific, achievable local actions. They emphasised mapping stakeholders, decision-makers, allies, and influencers critical to achieving intended outcomes.

A strong recommendation emerged to design small, practice-oriented local projects as a test bed for broader campaigns, using clear outcomes and specific actions that can be replicated and scaled up later.

A major theme was the difficulty in effectively communicating the value and uniqueness of IVS projects to external audiences. Participants noted that IVS must distinguish itself from general volunteering apps or voluntourism.

There was a call for stronger storytelling, clearer messaging, and use of diverse media (e.g., videos, campaigns) to engage young people and older generations alike.

Participants stressed that effective communication strategies should highlight the critical thinking, intercultural learning, and social impact elements that make IVS projects distinct and valuable.

The group also debated **the terminology** used to describe advocacy efforts. The term 'asks' was seen as potentially too weak or unclear. Alternatives such as 'rights' or 'policy demands' were proposed to more powerfully convey the movement's objectives. There was recognition that **while the current Advocacy Asks are grounded in values and real issues, they vary in nature — some represent end goals (e.g., recognition), others means (e.g., cross-border mobility), and thus require refined framing.** Participants agreed on the need to **prioritise certain advocacy areas for action**, recognising the capacity limitations of both organisations and the wider IVS network.

Lastly, the session emphasised the **importance of rooting advocacy in strong data collection, shared methodologies, and practical action plans.** Ideas such as regional ambassadors for advocacy, coordinated communication strategies, and creating platforms to share best practices were proposed. Participants also highlighted the need for careful branding and positioning of IVS advocacy efforts to **differentiate IVS values from other types of international volunteering.** Overall, there was a positive sense of progress, and a commitment to refining the advocacy framework in preparation for future organisational milestones.

In light of the day's learnings, discussions and insights gained, the 5 Advocacy Asks were reworked and are being finalised in a separate document. Going forward they will be known as the **Volunteer Rights in International Voluntary Service (IVS): A Policy Framework for Recognition, Protection, and Equity**

DAY 5 – 11 APRIL

**WRAP-UP &
NEXT STEPS**



Impact and measurement

- Value of local actions for IVS
- Learning around advocacy and community trends
- Strengthen impact measurement methods
- SWOT analysis of IVS and challenges.

Diversity and inclusion

- Different perspective on diversity
- Intersectional and intergenerational aspects
- Diversity in IVS attracts new people
- Encourage inclusive process

Organisational environment and process

- Brain cell relocation!
- The week was useful - fruitful
- Role IVS plays at national level
- Importance of collective work in the IVS space
- Good working environment
- Have fun while working

Communication and engagement

- Praise for process - strategic, participative, rich.
- Talk to contributors
- TikTok for content creation
- Move more into digital spaces without losing core values
- Participative approach
- Heart - moderation!
- Appreciate the power of secrets

Learning and sharing

- Grateful for quiet and profound inputs - different viewpoint
- Gain insights into history of IVS and individual perspectives
- Learning from other realities, especially Global South and North.

Vision and reflection

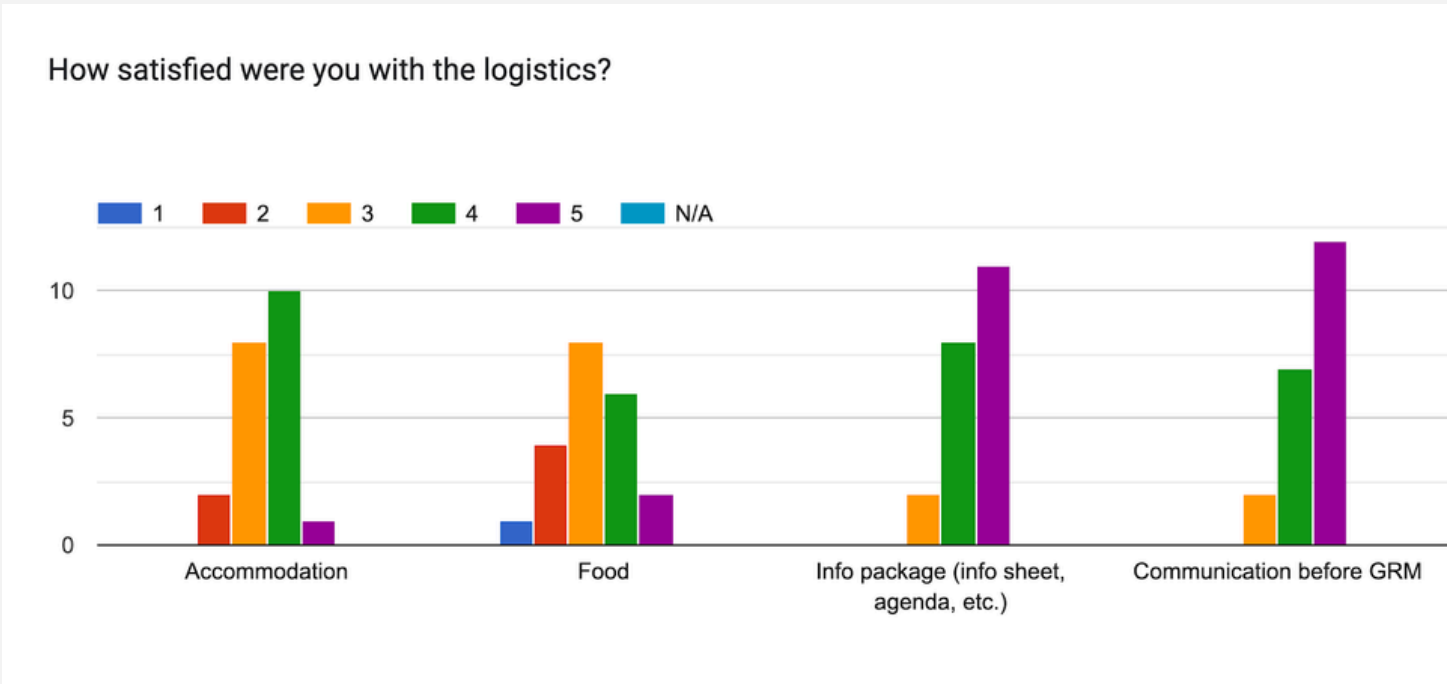
- Common vision - unity
- All trends interlinked
- Evolution of timeline of IVS!
- Feeling of evolving together
- Need to be self-critical



5.2.2 WRITTEN EVALUATION RESULTS

Participants also completed a written evaluation which was analysed by Bogdan Imre. Below is a summary of the key findings.

Satisfaction with logistics



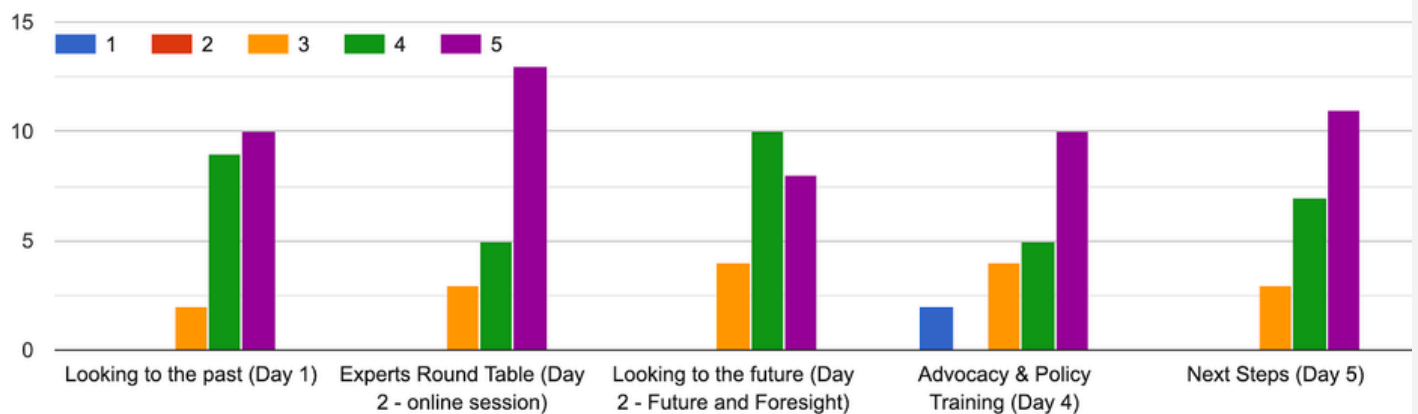
The survey results indicate a mixed level of satisfaction among participants regarding various logistical aspects of the event. Satisfaction with accommodation logistics received an average rating of 3.48 out of 5, suggesting that while it was generally acceptable, there is room for improvement. Food arrangements were rated lower, with an average of 3.19, indicating that this area may need significant attention to enhance participant experience. In contrast, the information package provided to participants was well-received, achieving a high average score of 4.43, reflecting its effectiveness in meeting attendees' needs. Additionally, communication prior to the GRM was rated even higher, with an impressive average of 4.48, highlighting the importance of clear and timely information in fostering participant satisfaction.

Usefulness

"Very important and stimulating experience"

The contributions to the discussions were generally perceived as highly useful by participants, as reflected in their ratings. Day 1's focus on "Looking to the Past" received an average score of 4.38 out of 5, indicating strong engagement with historical insights. The "Experts Round Table" on Day 2 was rated even higher, with an average of 4.48, showcasing the value participants found in the contributions from the panel members. However, the "Looking to the Future" session on the same day received a slightly lower average of 3.95, suggesting room for improvement in future forward-looking discussions. Day 4's session on "Advocacy & Policy" drew a solid average of 4.00, while Day 5's "Next Steps" also achieved a strong 4.38, reinforcing the overall positive reception of the contributions throughout the event.

How useful did you find the contributions to the discussions on the different parts of the GRM ? 1 = Not useful 5 = Very useful



Favourite part of the programme

The most frequently mentioned programme elements that offered participants the possibilities to learn and discuss about the future of IVS and Voices for Change were the sessions that focused on the Advocacy Proposals (7 mentions) and Future and Foresight (6 mentions).

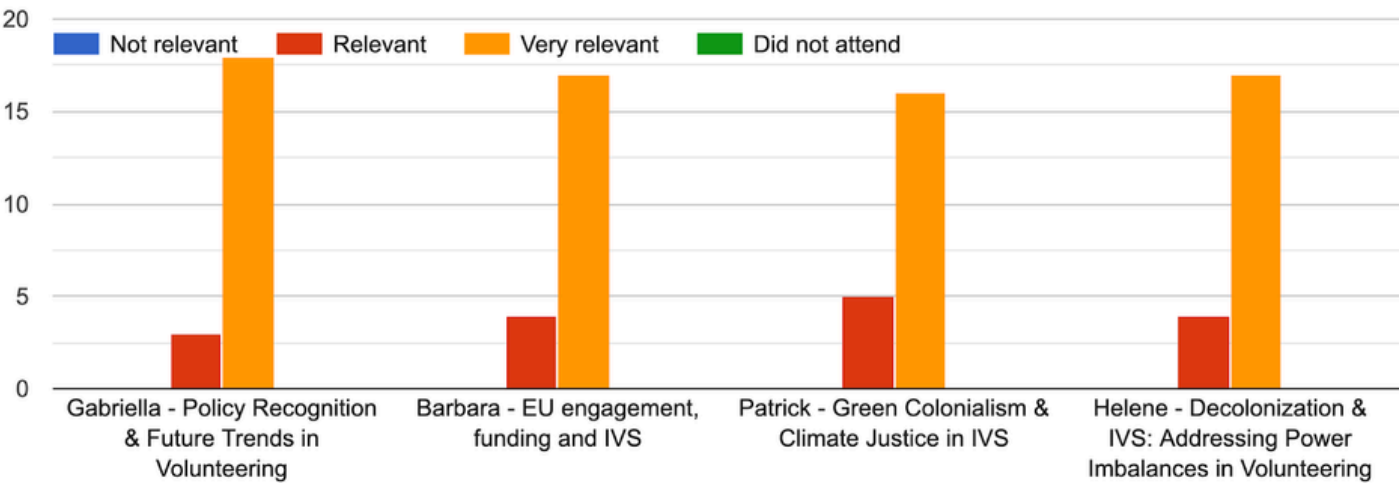
"Advocacy is not just about speaking up- it's about listening, learning, and transforming voices into action".

Least favourite part of the programme

Participants indicated Day 4 or a few sessions on Day 4 as their least favourite parts of the GRM meeting.

Online Panel

How interesting/useful did you find the contributions to the discussion on Shaping the Future of IVS – Policy, Advocacy, Social & Climate Justice made by the experts panel?



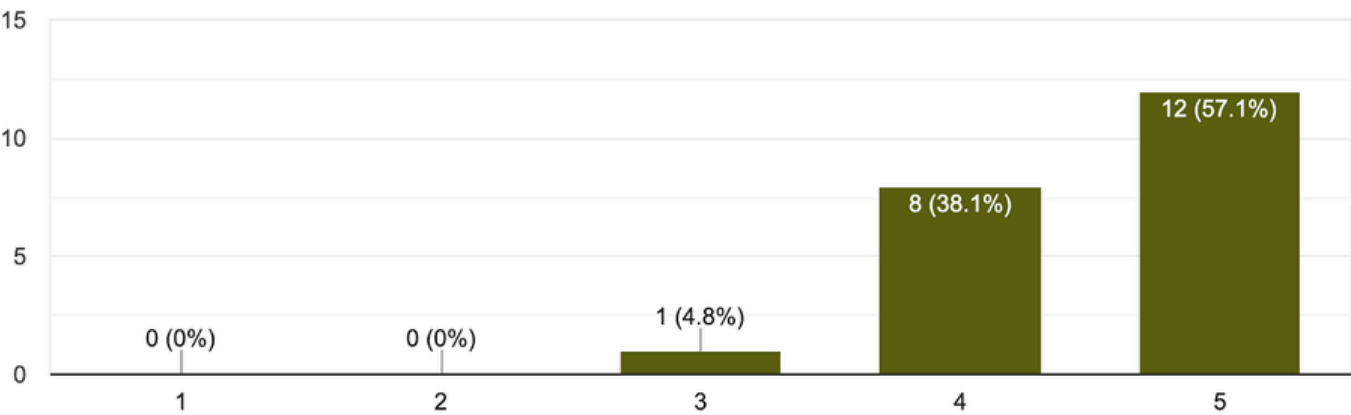
More than 75% of participants considered all interventions to be highly relevant, while every participant found them at least relevant.

Facilitation

Participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the overall facilitation, achieving an average rating of 4.52 out of 5.

How would you rate the overall facilitation of the GRM?

21 responses



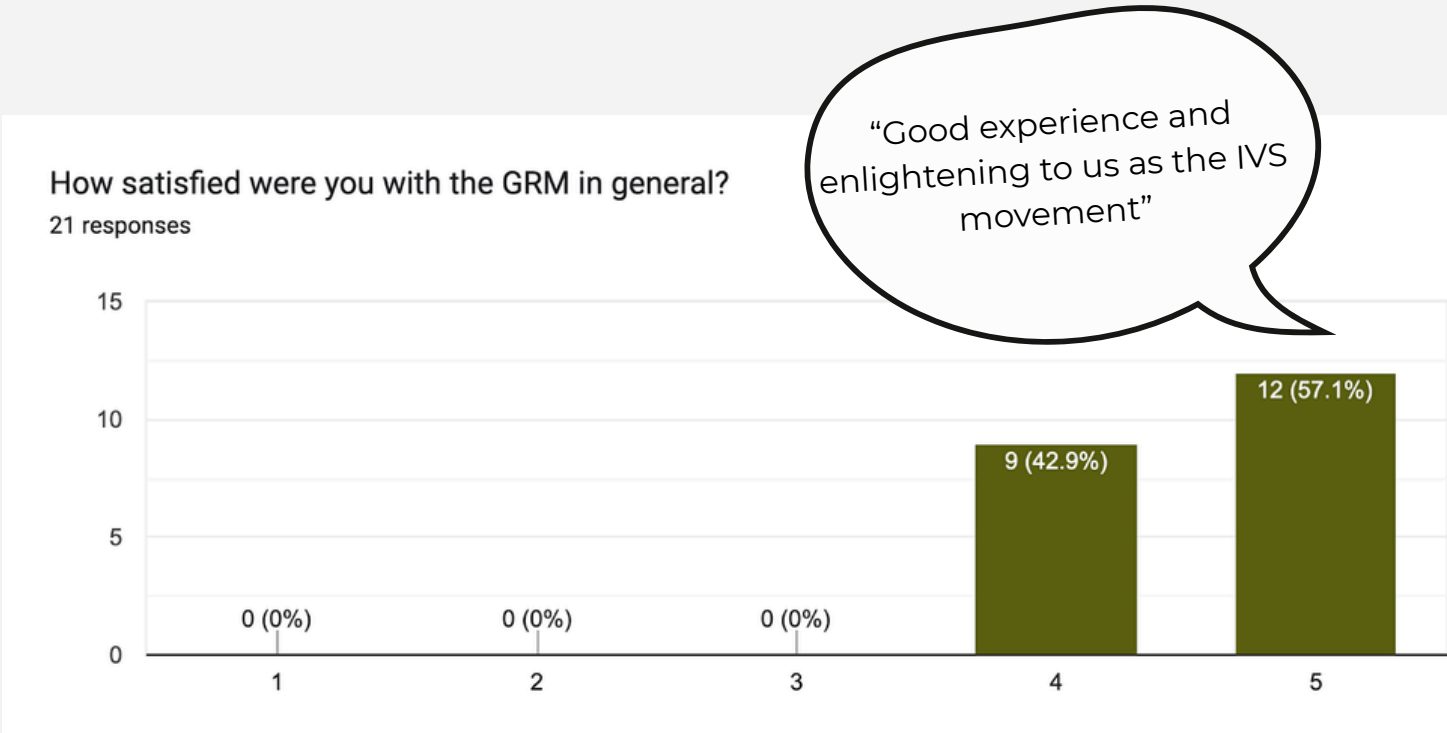
Key takeaways about the future of IVS

The meeting highlighted the need for IVS to adopt new tools and techniques in advocacy, particularly in preparation for the International Year of Volunteering for Sustainable Development (IYVSD) in 2026. Participants acknowledged that IVS is a unique movement with a promising future, but emphasised the importance of building resilience to navigate external challenges. The discussion underscored the necessity of analysing historical and emerging trends to develop adaptive strategies, while also recognising the value of a multicultural context that enriches the movement with diverse insights. The panel discussion outcomes pointed to the need for a strategic approach that shifts without diluting the IVS vision, alongside a call for greater synergy within the movement.

Additionally, the meeting addressed the importance of gaining recognition from higher-level institutions and the need to rebrand the network to highlight its unique attributes. Participants expressed optimism about the future of IVS, particularly with the potential use of AI in advocacy efforts. A collective approach was deemed essential for making meaningful changes, with an emphasis on understanding the realities of different member organisations and maintaining a global perspective. The value of a democratic and inclusive decision-making process was also highlighted, along with the need for clearer IVS identity to enhance recognition and development within the movement. Overall, collaboration and information exchange were identified as critical for the growth and effectiveness of IVS on a global scale.

Overall satisfaction

Overall satisfaction levels among participants were high, with 9 individuals rating their experience a 4 and 12 individuals giving a perfect score of 5 on a scale of 0 to 5.



5.3 CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

At the close of the meeting, **Helene Perold** offered the following reflections on her experience of the GRM, as a researcher from South Africa.

In her view, CCIVS can be a driving force for decolonising IVS. This is evidenced in the clarity of its cross-cutting values: decolonisation underpins all it does; the commitment to intersectional justice; and its passion for community-led and volunteer-driven change.

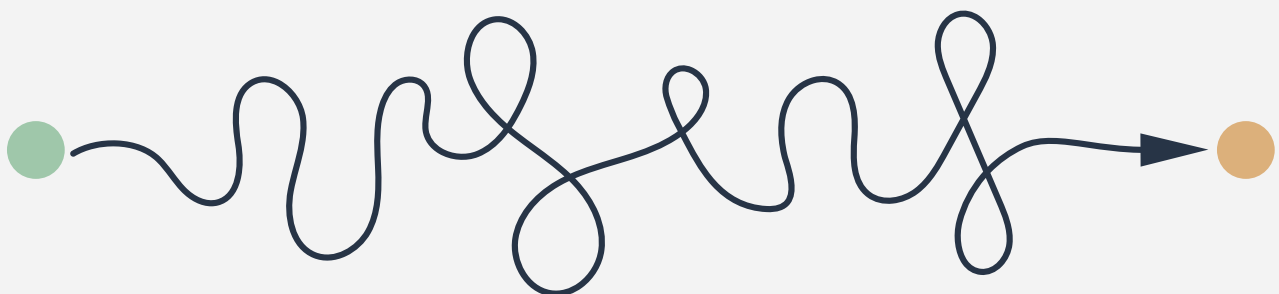
She was struck by how CCIVS is mobilising against structural constraints on funding and volunteer mobility, and its articulation of the real vulnerability confronting volunteers in regard to the insecure futures facing young people, the prevalence of mental health issues, and the need for safety and protection.

She suggested that in her view CCIVS could be very influential if it were to join the IVY26 call for greater recognition of and investment in volunteering.

Helene also mentioned that the GRM gave her new appreciation for the competitive environment in which CCIVS functions. She is of the view that finding ways of working with a wider range of partners in the transnational volunteering space may be an important strategy to widen support for its values and increase its resource base.

Finally, looking at the historical timeline of CCIVS, Helene is thrilled by the archival work being done and looks forward to the next period of renewal - 2026 and beyond.

She thanked CCIVS and all the participants for the learning opportunity afforded by her participation in the GRM and wished them well in taking the next steps.





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**Author: Helene Perold
May 2025**

Designed by : Yazan Madieh, Vicky Lovelock

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UNESCO House

1 Rue Miollis, 75015, Paris, France

secretariat@ccivs.org

www.ccivs.org