

Symposium on Environmental & Social Justice - Report



Project name	VOICES FOR CHANGE: MUSIC AND VOLUNTEERING FOR A DECOLONIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
Acronym	VOICES FOR CHANGE
Coordinator	CCIVS (THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE)

Project Partners



Co-Funded by:





About the Symposium

The Symposium on Environmental and Social Justice took place in November 2025 in Pretoria, South Africa, hosted by SAVWA (South Africa Volunteer Work Camp Association) and co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The activity brought together 27 participants from across the Voices for Change consortium, alongside external experts and facilitators.

The Symposium served as a key milestone of the project, consolidating results from previous phases, including the Global Reflection Meeting, Impact Measurement processes, Earth Artists Training, and Local Actions. It provided a structured space to translate these results into advocacy directions, policy-relevant discussions, and strategic outputs, directly contributing to the project's expected results.

Objectives

The objectives of the Symposium were to:

- Review and validate results achieved across the project
- Share practices and innovations in environmental and social justice through a decolonial lens
- Analyse impact findings and translate them into advocacy priorities and policy strategies

12/11 DAY 1: From Needs

Analysis to Shared Experiences

The first working day focused on internal alignment and reflection among consortium partners. Participants revisited the key stages of the project, including the Needs Analysis, Global Reflection Meeting outcomes, Impact Measurement Training, and Earth Artists Training and identified the threads connecting them as a coherent project journey.

Updates from related processes; the Living Earth campaign, Palestine Working Group, and Youth Committee initiatives, provided a broader perspective on the current state of the IVS movement. Discussions highlighted both challenges, including declining participation in some regions, and emerging shifts towards more decolonial, community-led, and climate justice-oriented approaches.

Key challenges identified:

- Declining volunteer participation in some regions
- Visa and mobility restrictions disproportionately affecting Global South participants
- Limited formal recognition of IVS in national and international policy frameworks
- The ongoing impact of conflict on volunteer exchange, particularly in Palestine, where continued violence in Gaza and restrictions in the West Bank were highlighted as severely limiting mobility and the ability to carry out planned activities. International solidarity was identified as a vital source of hope and as a practical expression of IVS values.

Emerging shifts identified:

- Growing adoption of decolonial approaches to programme design and evaluation
- Increased focus on community-led and locally-driven action rather than externally-imposed priorities
- Stronger integration of climate justice as a core IVS concern

Preliminary Impact Measurement Findings

Preliminary results from the Local Actions and the application of the Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology were presented and discussed in regional groups. The discussions identified three cross-cutting areas of emerging impact:

- Local actions produce concrete, immediate, and replicable change
- Disconnection between people and nature is a common starting point across all partner contexts, with small-scale acts of care and reconnection shown to generate new participation
- Solidarity across contexts and networks is itself a form of resistance

The afternoon was used collectively to prepare for the public Symposium the following day.



13/11 DAY 2: Symposium, Panel Discussion and Song Launch.

The Symposium represented a key public moment within the Voices for Change process, linking previous project phases with the development of advocacy tools and policy-oriented outputs. The morning combined the première of the project song with presentations of local actions, impact findings, and the Volunteer Rights Framework. The afternoon centred on a panel discussion and the development of the advocacy roadmap.

Opening Session

The CCIVS President welcomed participants by framing the Symposium as a moment of solidarity, creativity, and courage, emphasising that the strength of the project lies in the diversity of its voices and the collective commitment to a fairer world. The CCIVS Director outlined the Symposium's purpose: to provide a platform for reflection, dialogue, and exchange on environmental degradation, social injustice, and colonial legacies, and to demonstrate how International Voluntary Service, community-led action, and cultural expression can contribute to shaping a decolonial environmental and social justice agenda.



Keynote: Cultural Activism, Ubuntu and Environmental Justice

The keynote was delivered by a representative of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Southern Africa team, Anthea Hurling. The presentation explored the intersection of cultural activism and environmental justice, and addressed how IVS contributes to social and ecological justice from an external policy perspective.



Photo credit : Sydney Odhiambo

Key themes from the keynote:

- Music as a medium of truth and transformation: from freedom songs to indigenous chants, music carries cultural identity and political meaning across generations.
- The Ubuntu principle – ‘I am because we are’ – as a foundation for voluntary action and cross-cultural solidarity.
- Volunteering as a bridge between global expertise and local reality, building trust through sustained presence rather than short-term intervention.
- Decolonising environmental thinking and practice requires recognising ecological crises through local and indigenous knowledge systems, not only through Northern scientific frameworks.
- The shift from aid to agency: the goal of IVS should be transformation and collaboration, not dependency.
- Restoring the value of traditional ecological wisdom as a practical strategy for climate action.

Launch of “Echoes of Nature”

The première of “Echoes of Nature”, the VFC song created through the Earth Artists Training and Songwriting Workshop in Kenya, was a central moment of the Symposium. The lyrics were drawn directly from the impact stories collected through the MSC process, giving community voices a creative and public form.

In a particularly significant moment, some of the artists and featured voices present sang their parts live, alongside all participants and audience members. The launch was met with enthusiastic applause and emotional responses, with participants describing it as a moving collective expression of hope that embodies the spirit of Ubuntu.

The song was recognised and formally positioned as:

- A tool for advocacy and mobilisation, translating community experience into a form accessible to wider audiences
- A symbol of the project’s participatory and creative methodology, demonstrating that decolonial approaches can produce high-quality cultural outputs
- A resource for future campaigns, and officially proposed for use during the International Year of Volunteers 2026

The Earth Artists Handbook, together with the song and music video, was highlighted as a freely available tool for CCIVS network members and others engaged in ecosocial activism. All participants were invited to adapt and share the song in their own local contexts under the motto ‘Take the song, make it yours.’

EARTH ARTIVISTS TOOLKIT



Read it!

Echoes of Nature | Voices for Change Official Music Video



Watch it now!



A series of presentations showcased the local actions implemented across partner countries during the project period. These demonstrated how the project methodology, combining the MSC approach, the Earth Activists training, and the VFC song, was adapted to diverse local realities. The diversity of contexts highlighted the flexibility of the approach and the shared values connecting the partners.

Local actions presented:

- Italy (Cantiere Giovani): Upcycling broken umbrellas collected from local shops to create street shade structures near a youth centre in Naples. Collaborative renovation and greening of an asylum seeker centre, involving refugees, local hosts, and volunteers in a shared project to make the space more welcoming, including planting species from participants' countries of origin.
- Czech Republic (INEX): A multicultural workcamp bringing together participants from four continents. Following 40 days of engagement on environmental themes, volunteers self-organised a creative project painting a mural featuring the word 'water' in each of their respective languages, illustrating the shared nature of environmental challenges across different contexts.
- South Africa (SAVWA): Skill-building workcamps designed for long-term community impact, equipping young people with practical construction and sustainability skills to take back to their local communities.
- Palestine (PCMRD): Youth-led workshops on climate justice with teenagers from two refugee camps in Bethlehem, teaching about climate change and environmental responsibility. A workcamp with 57 young women and their children from marginalised communities, tree and flower planting in their neighbourhoods.
- Estonia (EstYES): Storytelling circles and grounding exercises exploring the concept of 'recolonising' as a lens for rethinking climate challenges and inspiring new forms of community engagement.

- India (FSL): University students explored environmental activism through music and case studies using the Reflection Tree model to link local actions with global sustainability frameworks. Creative reinterpretations of 'Echoes of Nature' were developed, connecting culture, conservation, and climate awareness.
- Ecuador (Fundación Chiriboga): Sustainable agriculture activities and coastal clean-ups connecting Amazonian indigenous youth with the ocean environment, many for the first time, building cross-ecosystem environmental understanding.
- Kenya (KVSO): Forest-based volunteering activities combining the environmental protection practices of local communities with their cultural dance traditions, using the VFC song to amplify the community's message about protecting the forest.
- Türkiye (GSM): Creative choreography and collective singing of the IVS song, turning advocacy into celebration and demonstrating the accessibility of music as an advocacy tool.

Across all local actions, a consistent finding emerged: small-scale, community-rooted activities produce meaningful and replicable change. The most significant outcomes were not always the largest projects, but those that created genuine reconnection, between people and nature, between volunteers and communities, and between participants across cultures.



Impact Measurement Findings

The impact measurement expert Francesco Volpini presented findings from the application of the Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology across local actions in all partner countries. Rather than using conventional surveys, the MSC technique invited participants to tell stories of change from their own lived experience, making the evaluation process itself participatory and consistent with the project's decolonial approach. Stories were collected in multiple formats including written accounts, videos, and comics.

Key methodological finding:

Knowing a great deal of information does not necessarily produce understanding. Stories give meaning to data. The MSC approach produced richer evidence of change than standard indicators would have captured, particularly in relation to shifts in values, relationships, and ecological awareness.

Cross-cutting themes from the impact stories:

Theme 1: Justice and Interdependence

- Injustice anywhere in the world is a shared concern that requires collective repair
- No community should be sacrificed for the survival or convenience of another
- Local actions that appear small – such as tending a plant or cleaning a shared space – carry political meaning when understood as acts of care against despair

Theme 2: Empowerment through Knowledge

- Concrete, community-based research and education create lasting change
- Learning in networks – between volunteers, communities, and organisations – generates forms of knowledge that cannot be produced individually
- Reciprocity is essential: the exchange must benefit all parties, not only the volunteers

Theme 3: Youth as Catalysts

- Across all partner contexts and all stories collected, young people appeared as active drivers and sustainers of change, not passive recipients
- Youth engagement in local actions produced outcomes that extended beyond the activities themselves into wider community mobilisation

Theme 4: Reclaiming, Repairing and Resisting

- Collective resilience is built through solidarity across different places and networks
- Connecting to each other – across cultures, generations, and geographies – is itself an act of resistance
- Local actions that reclaim shared spaces or ecological relationships create the conditions for longer-term community agency

These findings provided the evidence base for the advocacy discussions that followed, grounding the Volunteer Rights Framework and the advocacy roadmap in documented community experience rather than abstract policy argument.



Photo credit : Sydney Odhiambo



Volunteer Rights Framework

Volunteer Rights in International Voluntary Service

What every IVS participant should have access to...

- 1** Recognition of Learning & Contribution
- 2** Safe, Dignified, & Equitable Cross-Border Participation
- 3** Environmental Rights & Contributions to Climate and Social Justice
- 4** Access to Decolonised Funding Ecosystems
- 5** Safe, Inclusive & Rights-Based Participation
- 6** Respect for Local Communities & Cultural Contexts
- 7** Protection in Conflict-Affected & Politically Sensitive Contexts
- 8** Youth Participation & Intergenerational Governance

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CCIVS

Members of the CCIVS Youth Committee presented the Volunteers Rights Framework developed by the Voices for Change partnership and the IVS movement, as a policy tool grounding IVS advocacy in international human rights principles.



The Framework establishes that volunteering is a right, not a privilege, and identifies eight areas of entitlement for every IVS participant:

- Recognition of Learning and Contribution
- Safe, Dignified, and Equitable Cross-Border Participation
- Environmental Rights and Contributions to Climate and Social Justice
- Access to Decolonised Funding Ecosystems
- Safe, Inclusive and Rights-Based Participation
- Respect for Local Communities and Cultural Contexts
- Protection in Conflict-Affected and Politically Sensitive Contexts
- Youth Participation and Intergenerational Governance

The presentation emphasised that individual organisations cannot alone challenge structural barriers such as EU funding restrictions or visa regimes. An organised, collective effort is required. The Framework is positioned as a strategic response to that need, providing the foundation for advocacy asks directed at governments, funders, and international institutions. The International Year of Volunteers 2026 was identified as a key moment to advance these demands, as EU budget negotiations for the 2028-2037 period are currently underway and will be decisive for the next generation of youth and volunteering programmes.

Advocacy Roadmap

Silja Fischer (International Music Council) presented the emerging Voices for Change advocacy roadmap, developed from MSC story clusters, regional consultations, Youth Committee recommendations, and the outcomes of the Global Reflection Meeting.

Stakeholder-specific advocacy objectives:

Governments: formal recognition of IVS in public frameworks; mobility justice and visa reform; legal protection and diplomatic support for volunteers; public funding for IVS infrastructure.

Funders (including EU): decolonising EU youth programmes including Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps; decolonising funding mechanisms more broadly; climate justice investment; resourcing protection work in conflict contexts.

Specific ask: increase the Erasmus+ budget fivefold to reach marginalised communities, and reformulate Erasmus objectives towards active citizenship rather than employment outcomes.

EU Institutions: implementation of EU mobility strategy; policy coherence across climate, international partnerships, and youth programmes; removal of the category of ‘third countries’ as currently defined, which excludes many partners from meaningful programme participation; guarantees for grassroots organisations to prevent large operators from capturing the majority of available funding.

UN Agencies: UNESCO leading IVS recognition; collaboration with the UN Volunteers programme; protection frameworks through UN human rights bodies; recognition of IVS’s climate role through UNEP and climate bodies.

Educational Institutions: formal recognition of IVS as experiential learning; research and knowledge production through university partnerships.

Private Sector: employer recognition of IVS experience; commitment by voluntourism companies to end exploitative practices.

Implementation timeline (CCIVS Advocacy Roadmap 2025–2030):

- Phase 1 (2025–2026): IVY momentum – building visibility and securing commitments during the International Year of Volunteers; launch of the Volunteer Rights Framework on 5 December 2025; securing government endorsements.
- Phase 2 (2026–2028): Institutional engagement – engaging EU budget negotiations; meeting with EU, AU, and UN stakeholders; securing policy reforms and institutional commitments.

Phase 3 (2028–2030): Monitoring and accountability – tracking progress against commitments; celebrating wins; positioning for post-2030 frameworks.

Target outcomes by 2030:

- Visa barriers for volunteers cut by 50%
- Funding flowing more equitably to Global South organisations
- Volunteers better protected through legal and policy frameworks

Action Area	CCIVS Secretariat	CCIVS Members	Regional Coordinators	Partners
EU-level advocacy	Lead	Support	Input	Coalition
National-level advocacy	Support	Lead	Coordinate	Collaborate
UN engagement	Lead	Input	Regional voice	Coalition
Funding reform	Lead advocacy	Demand change	Regional analysis	Coordinate
Research & documentation	Coordinate	Contribute	Regional data	Partner institutions
Member capacity-building	Lead	Participate	Facilitate	Technical support

Panel Discussion: From Practice to Policy.

The afternoon panel discussion brought together four invited experts for a moderated dialogue on funding, power, decolonisation, climate justice, and the role of IVS in broader policy agendas. The panel was moderated by the lead facilitator and responded to questions from both the moderator and the audience.

Panel speakers:

Dr Vishwas Satgar

Professor of International Relations, University of the Witwatersrand; editor of the Democratic Marxism series; principal investigator, Emancipatory Futures Studies in the Anthropocene.

Helene Perold

Researcher and strategist, South Africa; founder of VOSESA; author of over thirty publications on civic engagement, youth development and social change; collaborator with UNV, FORUM, IAVE and Brookings.

Dr Jacob Mati

Deputy Director, Centre for African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI); Associate Professor, Witswatersrand Business School; 20+ years of experience at the intersection of civil society, philanthropy and governance.

Silja Fischer

Secretary General, International Music Council (IMC); responsible for IMC's advocacy strategy, membership development, and official representation.



On Coloniality and Power

- Coloniality persists after formal independence. The Global South continues to be treated as an object of exploitation: in the extraction of fossil energy, in the appropriation of minerals for the European green transition, in the militarisation of the West, and in the concentration of AI development in the North.
- Economic, political, and knowledge-based power relations continue to structure global hierarchies. Some areas and forms of knowledge are systematically valued less than others.
- The climate emergency is inseparable from this analysis: climate justice is a decolonial political project, not a technical one. Its ambition must be to change the structural conditions that produce both ecological crisis and global inequality.
- Democratic systemic reform is necessary for a liveable future. Power must be returned to local communities, who hold both the problems and the solutions.

On funding and civil society

- Northern organisations are positioned by donors as guarantors of quality, leading to a system in which Southern partners must route their work through Northern intermediaries to obtain certification and funding. This reinforces neocolonial power imbalances even within well-intentioned partnerships.
- Only a small percentage of international aid reaches directly affected communities. Reform of this model requires not only better intentions but structural change in how funding decisions are made and who controls them.
- Civil society organisations face three primary risks: loss of reputation, loss of status, and loss of funding. Navigating these risks requires building alliances with trusted partners, using clear and strategic communication, and maintaining evidence-based positions.
- Organisations should not accept financial support on conditions that conflict with their principles. Silence in the face of injustice is a form of complicity.

On CCIVS and IVS positioning

- CCIVS was recognised by the panel as the only organisation in the volunteer sector that has seriously and consistently tackled the issue of decolonisation. This constitutes a genuine strategic asset and a source of credibility with communities and researchers alike.
- CCIVS is uniquely positioned to cause systemic change and to hold its members accountable. Its evidence base, values, and global network give it the capacity to be a genuine agent of change rather than a commentator on it.
- There is currently a gap in how CCIVS documents and communicates the evidence of decolonised volunteer exchange in practice. Building this evidence base – through partnerships with universities and through the stories of communities themselves – would strengthen the legitimacy and reach of CCIVS advocacy.
- CCIVS must be able to take a clear political stand on justice, migration, and inequality. In the absence of that positioning, the organisation risks irrelevance. The risks of advocacy – reputational, financial, relational – are real, but must be navigated through evidence, alliances, and strategic communication rather than avoided through silence.

On music, culture and policy

- Culture has been systematically excluded from the design of the Sustainable Development Goals, contributing to their failure to produce transformative change. Music and cultural expression are not supplementary to advocacy, they are essential tools for conveying messages that data and policy papers cannot reach alone.
- The IMC's model of grounding international rights frameworks in grassroots input, as demonstrated by its five music rights, provides a template for how IVS can connect community experience to institutional advocacy.

Overall conclusions from the discussion

- Collaboration and collective action are the most important conditions for change. Without organisation, partnerships, and solidarity, systemic change cannot be achieved.
- Youth are being consulted but not included in decision-making. Genuine youth participation, not consultation, is a condition for legitimate policy outcomes.
- Climate funds currently require Northern intermediaries to reach Southern communities. Giving veto power to communities over projects on their own land, and funding directly to Global South organisations without Northern gatekeeping, are genuine policy opportunities.
- The multilateral system will not relinquish power voluntarily. Change must come from both ends: from within institutions and from organised civil society movements building power from below.
- The International Year of Volunteers 2026 is a strategic opportunity that must be used deliberately and not treated as a passive celebration.



Photo credit : Sydney Odhiambo

Watch the full recording of the morning session:

[Watch it in YouTube!](#)



Afternoon Plenary: Building the VFC Advocacy Strategy.

Following the panel, participants worked in smaller groups to distil the main messages and translate them into inputs for the CCIVS advocacy strategy. Groups focused on identifying which insights from the project presentations and expert discussion should inform the Volunteer Rights Framework and the advocacy roadmap.

After group discussions, the refined advocacy roadmap and responsibility matrix were presented and validated by the consortium. Participants identified the following opportunities for next steps:

- Joint campaigns connecting local actions to the IVY 2026 platform
- Partnerships with academic institutions to build the evidence base for decolonised IVS practice
- Partnerships with artistic institutions and networks to amplify the song and toolkit
- Cross-regional solidarity actions building on the connections made through the project
- Need to develop a future project to further develop Voices for Change methodology and CCIVS Impact Measurement processes through PAR research.



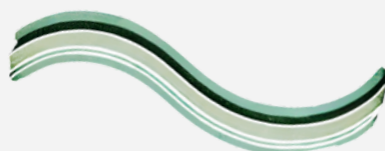


Conclusion of the day.

The Symposium demonstrated that community-based action, rigorous impact evidence, and strategic advocacy can be integrated into a coherent and powerful programme. The combination of the song launch, the MSC findings, the Volunteer Rights Framework, and the expert panel produced a set of interconnected outputs that move IVS advocacy from aspiration to grounded, evidence-based demands. By rooting advocacy in lived community experience, the project reinforced the role of IVS as a driver of decolonial, inclusive, and sustainable approaches to environmental and social justice.



Photo credit : Sydney Odhiambo



14/11 - DAY 3: Strategic Reflections and Integration

The third day opened with a grounding exercise. Participants were invited to share a single word capturing their response to the previous day. Words offered included 'inspired', 'urgent', 'connected', 'hopeful', and 'responsible'. Participants then worked in facilitated groups to discuss how to integrate the panel's messages into CCIVS strategy, with group outputs brought back to the plenary.

Four priority areas for CCIVS's future direction were identified and agreed:

1. Governance, Structure, and Member Ownership

- Member ownership must be strengthened through a more robust grassroots structure that goes beyond consultation to genuine co-governance
- The CCIVS organisational structure should become more regional and flexible to enable better engagement by members across different contexts
- Power dynamics, democratic accountability, and governance quality within the organisation and among stakeholders must be actively addressed, not assumed
- The Strategic Plan should provide direction without becoming so detailed that it constrains members' ability to act autonomously

2. Advocacy, Policy, and Systemic Change

- Existing power structures are failing. New approaches are needed that do not simply replicate the patterns of the old system
- CCIVS must seek to influence policy at both international and national levels, recognising that change requires action on multiple fronts simultaneously
- The organisation must take a clear position on key issues including visa justice, funding equity, and decolonisation. Neutrality on these questions is not possible



- Practical barriers such as visa restrictions must be addressed through collective solutions: for example, CCIVS coordinating invitation letters across member organisations to support Global South participants
- A Training of Trainers programme on advocacy should be developed to build capacity across the network

3. Values, Solidarity, and Resource Justice

- Renewed commitment to justice, solidarity, and creative activism as the core of CCIVS identity
- Active solidarity with movements for food sovereignty and sovereignty over natural resources
- A specific and structured focus on how to address funder relationships and resource justice, including developing the capacity to refuse funding offered on unacceptable conditions
- All action must remain community-based and centred on empowering communities to set their own priorities, not on delivering what funders or external experts determine is needed
- Climate justice must be approached without a colonialist framing: regions must be enabled to define their own climate priorities rather than having Northern frameworks imposed

4. Collaboration, Recognition, and Storytelling

- Collaboration among network members and with other organisations and movements must be actively fostered, not assumed
- Community involvement at the grassroots level must be the starting point, not an afterthought
- Advocacy for the formal recognition of volunteer skills should be progressed through the C-IVS Skills project as a concrete and deliverable advocacy objective
- Storytelling should be systematically used in relation to Voices for Change results, and a dedicated storytelling training programme ('Stories for Change') should be planned for 2027



Internal Consolidation and Advocacy Planning

Working groups of six to seven participants focused on three specific tasks:

- Refining the draft policy and advocacy proposals on environmental and social justice, resource justice, and decolonised funding, building directly on the MSC impact findings
- Reviewing the CCIVS Volunteer Rights Framework as a key advocacy tool for the movement and agreeing next steps for its dissemination and use
- Reviewing planned advocacy actions for 2026 and agreeing the timeline of events, including the Framework launch on 5 December 2025 and engagement with the IVY 2026 platform

Across all working group discussions, three conditions for future work were consistently identified as non-negotiable: community-led priorities, resource justice in funding relationships, and meaningful participation of young people in decision-making rather than consultation.



Photo credit : Sydney Odhiambo

Half-day Pretoria Historical City Tour

The group undertook a half-day city tour of Pretoria, specifically designed to connect the project's themes to the South African context. The tour visited the Union Buildings, the official seat of the South African government and a landmark of the independence era, and the Palace of Justice on Church Square, where the Rivonia Trial was held and where Nelson Mandela delivered his declaration about the struggle for a free and democratic society before being sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964.

The group visited the holding cells where the Freedom Charter remains hand-inscribed on the walls. This experience was described by participants as deeply moving and sobering – a visceral reminder of the reality of very recent injustice and of the long, collective effort required to end it. Participants reflected that the words of the project song – ‘Listen to the Earth, stand with your people, let’s make a change’ – took on new meaning in that context, connecting the project’s advocacy aims to a larger and continuing history of resistance.



Photo credit : Sydney Odhiambo

15/11 DAY 4: Looking to the Future

Planning engagement in the INV (International Year of Volunteering) 2026

The group was joined online by Sandra Koch, a representative of the UN Volunteers (UNV) programme, Secretariat for the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026.

Key information shared on IVY 2026:

- The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2026 the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development
- Objectives include: recognition and measurement of volunteer contributions; integration of volunteerism into development planning; policies removing inequalities and risks in volunteering; and development of knowledge platforms promoting new forms of volunteering
- 13 member states have officially designated IVY 2026 focal points; 54 countries co-sponsored the founding resolution 78/127
- IVY 2026 opens opportunities for greater recognition, increased support, and amplified visibility for volunteering globally
- The project song 'Echoes of Nature' was identified as a potential resource for IVY 2026 communications and the UNV representative expressed strong interest in sharing it through their networks and newsletter
- The IVY 2026 logo is available for use at events and in materials directly aligned with the year's objectives
- Resources including toolkits and logo materials are available at ivy@unv.org

Agreement reached: CCIVS will engage actively with the IVY 2026 platform, sharing the song, the toolkit, and the impact stories as contributions to the year's global campaign.

Voices for Change 2026 Planning

Following the IVY 2026 session, the group moved into planning for the Voices for Change 2026 continuation project. The session introduced the initiative's goals and upcoming creative community engagement activities.

Key agreements reached included:

- Partner organisations will share their experiences and lessons learned in a structured way to inform the design of the next phase
- Dialogue tables will be planned to exchange perspectives on inclusion, creativity, and change across partner contexts
- Training on interview techniques for authentic community storytelling will be provided to all participating organisations
- Visual materials will be compiled for a final collective presentation

ART, DIALOGUE, AND VOLUNTEERING ARE TOOLS TO INSPIRE TRANSFORMATION.

Planning for Palestine 2026

A session was dedicated to preparing for the forthcoming Voices for Change project meeting in Palestine. The session covered the general situation in Palestine, including the ongoing constraints on mobility and the humanitarian context, and identified priorities and responsibilities for the consortium in the next steps.

The group discussed how Voices for Change results – the song, the toolkit, and the impact stories – can contribute to the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026, and how the network can maintain meaningful solidarity with Palestinian partners under current conditions. Specific responsibilities were agreed and will be documented in the project management plan.

Volunteer Rights Framework: Next Steps

The Volunteer Rights Framework was confirmed as the primary reference document for CCIVS advocacy work on recognition, safe and equitable mobility, prevention of harassment, and decolonised funding practices.

The group agreed that the Framework should be:

- Launched publicly on 5 December 2025
- Shared with all CCIVS member organisations for endorsement and use in their own national advocacy contexts
- Used as the basis for engagement with EU institutions during budget negotiations for the 2028-2037 period
- Connected explicitly to the IVY 2026 campaign to maximise visibility

Evaluation and Closing

Participants were asked to revisit the expectations and concerns recorded at the beginning of the event and to identify what they were taking away. Feedback was structured using both written sticky notes and a ‘human thermometer’ method, in which participants physically positioned themselves on a scale from 0 (poor) to 10 (excellent) to assess different aspects of the event.

Participants shared renewed motivation for their work, new knowledge on social-ecological activism, creative inspiration from the song launch and local action presentations, and renewed hope for the future of IVS. Several noted that the Pretoria city tour had deepened their understanding of the historical and political stakes of the advocacy work.

The event was closed with words of thanks from CCIVS and the host organisation SAVWA.





MUSIC AND VOLUNTEERING
FOR A DECOLONIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA



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Design: Julieta Blanco
Edition: Victoria Lovelock
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