

Stakeholder-Specific Advocacy Platform and Advocacy Agenda **2025–2030**

Implementing the CCIVS Volunteer Rights Framework
2026



Developed through the Voices for Change project (2024–2026)
Co-funded by the European Union



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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This Stakeholder-Specific Advocacy Platform and Advocacy Agenda 2025–2030 accompanies the **CCIVS Volunteer Rights Framework: A Rights-Based Framework for International Voluntary Service**, published in March 2026. The two documents are designed to be read together. Where the Framework sets out the rights every IVS participant is entitled to expect, this companion document sets out what governments, funders, educational institutions, and international bodies need to do to make those rights real. The document identifies priority policy reforms, institutional responsibilities, advocacy opportunities and accountability mechanisms needed to advance these rights over the period 2025–2030.

How the Volunteer Rights Framework was developed

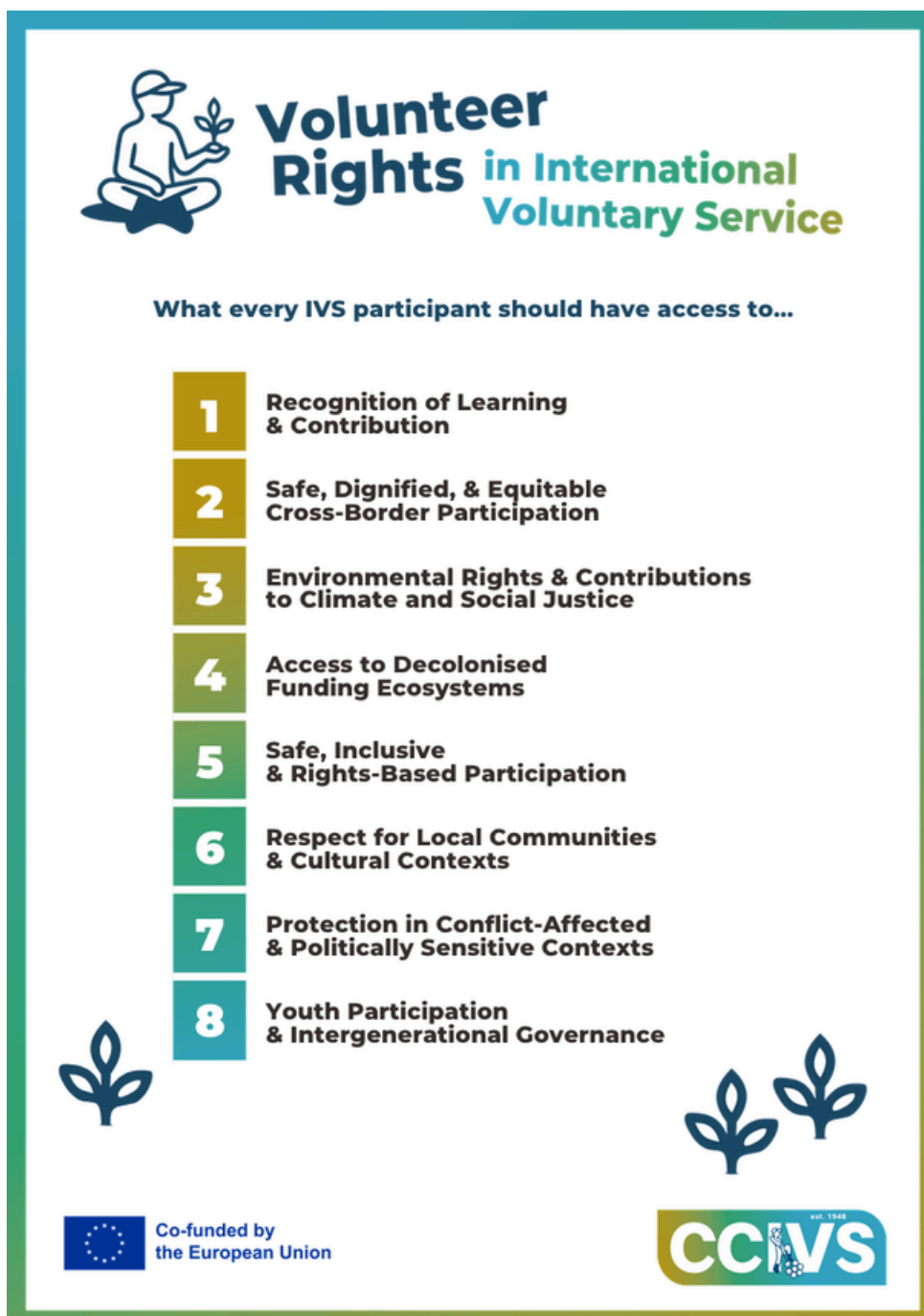
The Volunteer Rights Framework was developed through the Voices for Change project, a Large Scale Initiative co-funded by the European Union and coordinated by CCIVS with twelve partner organisations across the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, India, Italy, Kenya, Palestine, South Africa, Turkey, and France. And included a participatory process that drew together the experiences of CCIVS member organisations over almost two years.

A global membership survey opened the process, asking organisations and volunteers what was happening in their communities and what conditions they needed to participate safely and meaningfully. Local Actions in ten countries gathered community stories using the Most Significant Change technique, surfacing realities of climate breakdown, displacement, restricted mobility, and structural exclusion that volunteers and host communities live with every day. The Symposium on Environmental and Social Justice in Pretoria, held in November 2025, brought members together to test the draft Framework against those realities. The Framework was validated by the General Assembly on 16 November 2025 and published in March 2026, providing the evidence base for the advocacy priorities set out in this companion document.

The Eight Rights

The Volunteer Rights Framework sets out eight rights to which every IVS participant is entitled, rooted in international human rights instruments and in the lived experience of the IVS movement.

They are:



 **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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From a project deliverable to ongoing CCIVS work

Although the Volunteer Rights Framework and this advocacy companion are deliverables of the Voices for Change project, the work they set out reaches well beyond the lifetime of any single project. The Framework is central to CCIVS's global advocacy agenda. It will continue to be carried forward through CCIVS projects and CCIVS' engagement with UNESCO, the European Union, UN agencies, regional bodies, and national governments. The advocacy roadmap set out here forms part of the foundation for the CCIVS Strategic Plan 2028–2032 and will guide CCIVS, its members, and its partners through the next five years and beyond.

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

PART 1: Sets out the structural changes CCIVS demands of each stakeholder group, organised by institutional actor.

PART 2: translates those demands into a five-year roadmap with phases, actions, and policy windows.

PART 3: sets out how progress will be tracked and how stakeholders will be held to their commitments.

Each part can be read independently. Member organisations engaging with national governments will find Part I, Stakeholder Group A, most directly useful. Partners working on EU policy will turn to Stakeholder Group C and to Phase 2 of the roadmap. Funders reviewing their own practice will find Stakeholder Group B.



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PART 1

STAKEHOLDER-SPECIFIC ADVOCACY PLATFORM

Volunteer rights cannot be fully realised without systemic change. Individual IVS Organisations cannot eliminate visa barriers, create social protection policies, or fund the movement adequately on their own.

THIS REQUIRES ACTION FROM GOVERNMENTS, FUNDERS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES.



This section outlines the structural changes CCIVS advocates for from each institutional actor. These represent priority reforms necessary to make International Voluntary Service accessible, safe, recognised, and sustainable.

NOTE ON ROLES

National advocacy is led by CCIVS member organisations in their own countries, supported by the Secretariat where appropriate. CCIVS leads on regional and global advocacy in coordination with members and allied movements. The Responsibility Matrix at the end of Part II sets this out in detail.

GOVERNMENTS

National and local policy and protection frameworks

Governments at both national and local levels hold responsibility for creating the legal, policy, and funding frameworks that enable volunteer rights. This includes visa reform, recognition systems, protection mechanisms, and public investment in IVS.

OBJECTIVE 01

Formal Recognition of IVS in Public Frameworks



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

Governments should recognise International Voluntary Service as a form of civic participation, experiential and non-formal learning, and contribution to national and local development goals, positioning it as a recognised pathway alongside formal education and employment.



NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- **Embed IVS into national youth policies, education strategies, civic participation and environment frameworks** with dedicated sections outlining how IVS contributes to youth development, skills acquisition, social cohesion, and ecological resilience.
- **Create national volunteer recognition systems** that validate skills and competencies gained through IVS, compatible with European frameworks (Youthpass, Europass) and regional equivalents, and interoperable with the CCIVS Competency Framework (C-IVS Skills). See also Stakeholder Group E: Educational Institutions
- **Recognise IVS as relevant professional experience** in public sector recruitment, civil service entry, and career advancement, where government institutions are the employer.
- **Recognise the contribution of IVS and community** volunteering within the implementation and reporting of national climate commitments (NDCs), where relevant, including contributions to ecosystem restoration, climate resilience and community-led sustainability.
- **Support research and data collection** on IVS's contribution to social cohesion, peacebuilding, youth development, and environmental action.



LOCAL & MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- **Recognise IVS within city/region youth** and community strategies including IVS projects in local development and climate plans.
- **Provide municipal certification/endorsement** of learning and service in coordination with national systems and the C-IVS Skills framework.
- Offer practical enablers including:
 1. *Use of public facilities for volunteer activities and accommodation*
 2. *Local transport passes for volunteers during their service*
 3. *Access to community spaces for project implementation*
 4. *Small grants and municipal scholarships for under-resourced participants.*
- **Facilitate twinning/partnerships** between municipalities to host reciprocal IVS projects and foster international solidarity at local level.

POLICY WINDOWS:

- **NDC implementation and reporting through to 2029 — the 2035 round closed in 2025, so the entry point is how commitments are delivered and reported, not what is submitted**
- **The 2030 NDC round (2040 targets) — falls at the close of this agenda and should be prepared for from 2029**

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- **National Youth Policy reviews and development processes**
- **Education reform consultations**
- **Social protection policy reviews**
- **Municipal strategic planning cycles**
- **Local climate action plan development**

CCIVS ACTION:

- **Member organisations lead in their own countries; the Secretariat provides talking points, model language and comparative examples on request**
- **The Secretariat documents and shares examples of where IVS has been recognised in national frameworks, so that members can use relevant precedents in their advocacy**

OBJECTIVE 02

Mobility Justice and Visa Reform



WHAT MUST HAPPEN:

Governments must dismantle visa systems that reproduce colonial hierarchies and exclude volunteers based on passport privilege.



NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- **Create clear, accountable timelines** for visa decisions and simplified procedures for volunteers participating through recognised IVS organisations, including consideration of multi-entry or longer-validity visas for repeat volunteers where appropriate.
- **Publish clear, fee-free, plain-language information** on visa categories, required documents, timelines, appeal routes and applicants' rights, and phase out mandatory reliance on private visa intermediaries that add cost and opacity.
- **Train consular and migration officials in:**
 1. *The nature and value of International Voluntary Service*
 2. *Human rights frameworks and non-discrimination principles*
 3. *Decolonial perspectives on mobility and global citizenship*
 4. *Conflict-sensitive approaches for volunteers from politically sensitive regions*
 5. *Bias-mitigation and quality-assurance of discretionary decisions.*
- **Enable practical access to consular services** where no resident embassy/consulate exists, including:
 6. *Applications via protecting-power embassies or regional service points*
 7. *Remote filing and recognised IVS organisation drop-off where security permits*
 8. *Publishing service-level standards for appointments and decisions.*
- **Provide fair fees and timelines including:**
 9. *Fee waivers or reductions for low-income applicants*
 10. *Clear and appealable decision deadlines with receipt tracking*
 11. *Avoiding requirements that impose disproportionate costs (e.g., unnecessary certified translations).*

- **End discriminatory practices** based on nationality, passport, region of origin or perceived migration risk by:
 1. *Transparent appeals mechanisms when discrimination occurs*
 2. *Publishing anonymised refusal statistics and reasons by mission to enable oversight*
 3. *Ensuring accessible, timely redress mechanisms.*
- **Align national visa policies with international frameworks** including:
 1. *EU Youth Mobility Strategy*
 2. *African Union Protocol on Free Movement of Persons*
 3. *Regional free movement protocols (ECOWAS, CEMAC, CEEAC, SADC in Africa; equivalents in Asia, Latin America).*



LOCAL & MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- **Provide official invitation letters and municipal attestations** that support visa applications and demonstrate local sponsorship.
- **Offer municipal liaison with consulates/embassies** (where present) and create a city mobility focal point to track cases and reduce delays.

POLICY WINDOW:

- **Schengen Visa Code review (ongoing) - EU Member States must implement reforms that facilitate volunteer mobility**

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- **National immigration policy reform processes**
- **Municipal international cooperation strategy development**

CCIVS ACTION:

- **The Secretariat leads on the EU dimension, in coordination with Group C, Objective 1**
- **Evidence shared by members on visa refusals, delays, costs and administrative barriers informs national and EU-level advocacy**

OBJECTIVE 03

Legal Protection and Diplomatic Support



WHAT MUST HAPPEN:

Governments must protect IVS volunteers as civilians engaged in legitimate civic action, particularly when they face detention, harassment, or persecution.



NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- **Recognise IVS volunteers** as legitimate civic actors engaged in peacebuilding, human rights protection, environmental action, and community development, and ensure they are not subject to unnecessary surveillance or restrictions.
- **Integrate volunteer protection** into national frameworks for civilian protection, peacebuilding, and civic participation.
- **Provide accessible diplomatic** and consular support including:
 1. 24/7 consular assistance for volunteers in crisis situations
 2. Legal aid for volunteers facing charges related to their volunteer work
 3. Coordination with local human rights organisations for rapid response
 4. Evacuation support when volunteers face imminent danger.
- **Support volunteers facing criminalisation** for legitimate solidarity work through:
 5. Public defense of volunteers accused of illegal activity for humanitarian or rights-based actions
 6. Diplomatic pressure on governments persecuting volunteers or restricting civic space
 7. Visa and asylum protection for volunteers who cannot safely return home.
- **Safeguard civic space** by ensuring national security frameworks do not criminalise IVS or solidarity work. Review and amend, where necessary:
 1. Anti-terrorism laws that treat humanitarian or solidarity work as criminal
 2. Foreign agent laws that restrict volunteers working with international Organisations
 3. Surveillance systems that target civil society actors including volunteers.
- **Reaffirm that IVS operates through civilian solidarity**, distinct from humanitarian intervention or military activity, and must be protected as such.



LOCAL & MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- **Establish local rapid-response protocols**, including:
 1. *Legal referrals to pro bono networks*
 2. *Safe accommodation in emergency situations*
 3. *Emergency stipends for volunteers in distress*
 4. *Contact networks with local bar associations and psychosocial services.*
- **Create hotlines for volunteers in distress** and establish memoranda with local legal aid and mental health providers.
- **Publicly safeguard civic space at the municipal level** through appropriate permits and protection against harassment during lawful activities.

POLICY WINDOWS:

- **Universal Periodic Review cycles for states where members have documented cases** - see Group D, Objective 3, with which this work should be coordinated

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- National security policy reviews
- Human rights action plan development
- Municipal public safety strategy consultations
- Local human rights defender protection mechanisms

CCIVS ACTION:

- Members lead nationally; the Secretariat coordinates where a case crosses borders or requires escalation to UN mechanisms
- The Secretariat supports members facing retaliation for advocacy work, as committed in Part III

OBJECTIVE 04

Public Funding for IVS Infrastructure



WHAT MUST HAPPEN:

Governments must provide adequate, long-term public funding for IVS programmes and infrastructure, recognising volunteering as a public good that contributes to national and local development priorities.



NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- **Direct public funding** for IVS organisations through national youth ministries, development agencies, or civic participation programmes with minimum 3-year funding cycles.
- **Multi-year, flexible funding** rather than short-term project grants with excessive bureaucracy and narrow outputs, with:
 1. *Meaningful pre-financing capabilities*
 2. *Proportionate compliance requirements*
 3. *Eligibility for core costs, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), accessibility and mobility support.*
- **Funding that reaches IVS organisations in all regions of the country**, not only capital cities or well-connected NGOs, with simplified application processes for smaller organisations.
- **Support for national IVS platforms and networks** to coordinate volunteering opportunities, share resources, maintain quality standards, and represent the sector in policy dialogue.
- **Investment in volunteer preparation, support, and recognition systems** as part of public youth and civic participation infrastructure comparable to services such as career guidance or youth information centres.
- **Fund research and evaluation** to demonstrate IVS impact and inform policy development.



LOCAL & MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD:

- **Create municipal co-funding** lines for hosting costs, local coordination, translation, accessibility and community participation expenses.
- **Offer micro-grants/sub-grants** for neighbourhood initiatives that host volunteers, with light reporting requirements.
- **Co-finance housing**, local transport and facility use for volunteers and community partners.
- **Participate in regional pooled funds** (e.g., metropolitan or provincial) to sustain smaller host organisations.

POLICY WINDOWS

- **National budget cycles** — annual, and firmly closing; positioning IVS investment within youth, education or international cooperation budget lines
- **Municipal budget planning processes**

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

- **Regional development funding allocation**

CCIVS ACTION

- **National advocacy is carried out by national member organisations, with support from CCIVS where appropriate**

FUNDERS

Resource Justice and Decolonised Mechanisms

Funders, particularly the European Union, international foundations, bilateral donors, and public development agencies, must transform how resources are allocated to eliminate structural exclusion and donor control.

OBJECTIVE 01

Decolonising EU Youth Programmes (Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps)



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

The EU must ensure its flagship youth programmes are genuinely global and equitable, addressing structural barriers that limit participation beyond Europe.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Expand participation opportunities** to organisations outside EU and Western Balkans, allowing organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific to be lead applicants with access to coordination funding, not only participation roles.
- **Simplify application processes** that currently favour large, experienced organisations:
 1. *Reduce unnecessary administrative complexity and ensure requirements are proportionate to the size and value of the project.*
 2. *Accept applications in multiple languages, including languages widely used among participating regions such as English, French, Spanish, and Arabic.*
 3. *Provide technical assistance and mentoring for first-time applicants*
 4. *Reduce or remove co-financing requirements where they create barriers for under-resourced organisations, particularly those from Global South contexts.*
 5. *Do not require certified translations of official documents, or provide financial support for these.*

- **Reform the Quality Label** system to ensure that assessment criteria recognise diverse organisational models and do not disadvantage organisations because of different legal, governance, or administrative contexts.
- **Fund longer-term volunteering** with adequate support for volunteers and hosting organisations, recognising the value of sustained engagement rather than prioritising only short-term mobility.
- **Recognise political and solidarity work** as legitimate within youth programmes, explicitly allowing projects focused on human rights, advocacy, climate justice, and challenging structural inequalities—not only service provision or "neutral" activities.
- **Create transparent accountability** when National Agencies apply criteria inconsistently or make discriminatory funding decisions, with appeals mechanisms and regular audits of equity in funding distribution.
- **Ensure funding requirements** do not prevent organisations from addressing human rights issues, structural inequalities, or legitimate civic concerns.

POLICY WINDOWS:

- Erasmus+ Mid-term Evaluation follow-up (2025) - Commission report on 2021-2027 program provides evidence base for reforms
- MFF 2028-2034 negotiations (2025-2027) - Next generation of EU youth programmes will be designed now:
 1. Commission proposal: July 2025 (already presented)
 2. European Parliament and Council negotiations: 2025-2027 (draft report already presented)
 3. Adoption deadline: Before January 2028
 4. This represents a key opportunity to influence the design of the next generation of EU youth programmes.
- European Solidarity Corps evaluation (ongoing 2025)

CCIVS ACTION:

- Submit formal input to MFF consultations on youth program design
- Engage bilaterally with DG EAC, DG INTPA, and Members of the European Parliament involved in the CULT Committee
- Coordinate advocacy with other IVS networks and Global South youth Organisations
- Publish evidence of current exclusions and impact of barriers

FUNDERS

Resource Justice and Decolonised Mechanisms

Funders, particularly the European Union, international foundations, bilateral donors, and public development agencies, must transform how resources are allocated to eliminate structural exclusion and donor control.

OBJECTIVE 02

Decolonising Funding Mechanisms (all funders)



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

Beyond EU programmes, all funders (foundations, bilateral donors, international Organisations, public development agencies) must examine and transform funding practices that privilege Northern Organisations and perpetuate donor control.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Prioritise funding for organisations** in the Global South and structurally marginalised regions in the Global North (rural areas, peripheral regions, Organisations working with marginalised communities), setting measurable targets for equitable funding distribution, including increased access for Global South-led organisations.
- **Eliminate financial barriers including:**
 1. *Pre-financing requirements (provide advance funds; do not require organisations to spend first and reclaim later)*
 2. *Banking requirements that exclude organisations without European bank accounts*
 3. *Requirements for matched funding or co-financing that privilege wealthy organisations in all countries or put strong constraints on mid-size organisations.*
- **Recognise diverse organisational capacities by:**
 4. *Not requiring all IVS organisations to fit Northern institutional models (formal legal registration, large boards, audit capacity, specific governance structures)*
 5. *Valuing different forms of organisation (grassroots collectives, community-led initiatives, informal networks, cooperatives)*

3. Introducing proportionate reporting and compliance requirements, including simplified reporting options for smaller grants

4. Providing capacity support that respects local approaches rather than imposing external standards.

- **Transfer decision-making power to recipient regions through:**

1. Regional advisory boards with real authority over funding decisions (not just consultation)
2. Community-led grantmaking where local actors decide priorities and select grantees
3. Funding coalitions of Southern organisations to manage sub-granting programmes
4. Trust-based philanthropy approaches that give grantees flexibility in how funds are used.

- **Ensure funding doesn't reproduce colonial dynamics by:**

5. Eliminating requirements to partner with Northern organisations to access funds
6. No conditions that silence political positions or restrict advocacy work
7. No restrictions on supporting volunteers from certain countries or regions
8. No requirements that undermine local autonomy or community decision-making
9. Reject safeguarding requirements that are imposed without regard to local contexts or that undermine locally appropriate safeguarding approaches.

- **Practice transparency through:**

- a. Publishing clear criteria for funding decisions before applications open
- b. Providing meaningful feedback to unsuccessful applicants
- c. Making funding data public (who received how much, for what purposes, with what outcomes)
- d. Creating accountability mechanisms when funding decisions appear discriminatory.

- **Provide multi-year, core funding** rather than project-only grants that don't cover organisational operations.

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Foundation strategy refresh cycles and published funding reviews
- Sector convening on funding justice and trust-based philanthropy
- Annual reporting moments, where funders publish distribution data that can be analysed and challenged

POLICY WINDOWS:

- **No policy windows: philanthropic practice does not run on a fixed calendar**

CCIVS ACTION:

- Bilateral engagement with major foundations
- Coalition-building with other movements advocating for funding justice (climate justice, feminist movements, Indigenous rights)

OBJECTIVE 03

Climate Justice Investment



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

Beyond EU programmes, all funders (foundations, bilateral donors, international Organisations, public development agencies) must examine and transform funding practices that privilege Northern Organisations and perpetuate donor control.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Prioritise funding for community-led** climate resilience, ecosystem restoration, agroities including s as leaders in environmental protection and climate adaptation, ensuring they control project design and resource allocation.
- **Reject funding for projects** that constitute green colonialism including:
 1. *Land grabs for "conservation" or "renewable energy" that displace communities*
 2. *Extractive projects for minerals needed for "green technology" without community consent*
 3. *Carbon offset schemes that shift responsibility from polluters to affected communities*
 4. *Large-scale monoculture tree planting that destroys ecosystems*
 5. *"Sustainable development" projects imposed without community leadership.*
- **Fund IVS organisations** working on climate justice, recognising that this work often involves addressing public policy, human rights and structural inequalities, and should not be excluded on the basis that it is not politically neutral.
- **Support volunteers as contributors** to territorial care and ecological governance, not as external fixers or short-term labour.
- **Ensure climate funding reaches grassroots organisations** through simplified access mechanisms, not only large international NGOs with grant-writing capacity.
- **Measure impact based** on community-defined indicators, not only carbon metrics or donor-preferred outcomes.

POLICY WINDOWS:

- Green Climate Fund strategic planning cycles
- Global Environment Facility replenishment negotiations (GEF-9, 2026-2030)
- UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) mid-term review

CCIVS ACTION:

- The Secretariat uses evidence from the Living Earth campaign and other relevant CCIVS initiatives to advocate for greater recognition and resourcing of community-led climate action and volunteering
- CCIVS brings these messages into relevant funding and civil society discussions, working with environmental and climate justice partners where specialist climate-finance expertise is needed
- Evidence and examples shared by members and regional structures help demonstrate the contribution and funding needs of community-led climate action

OBJECTIVE
04Resourcing Protection Work In
Conflict Contexts

WHAT MUST HAPPEN

Funders must provide dedicated resources for IVS work in conflict-affected and politically sensitive contexts, recognising this work carries higher costs and risks.

- **SPECIFIC ACTIONS:**

- **Dedicated funding for volunteer protection systems** including:
 1. *Risk assessment and conflict-sensitivity training for volunteers and staff*
 2. *Digital security tools and training (encrypted communications, secure data storage)*
 3. *Mental health and psychosocial support (during deployment and post-return)*
 4. *Emergency response capacity (evacuation, legal aid, medical care)*
 5. *Long-term support for volunteers facing consequences of their participation (ongoing threats, visa restrictions, trauma).*
- **Fund organisations working in conflict-affected** contexts without requiring forms of neutrality that prevent legitimate human rights, peacebuilding or solidarity work, or that erase analysis of the structural causes of conflict.
- **Support peacebuilding and reconciliation** programmes that are community-led, long-term, and recognise that sustainable peace requires addressing structural injustice.
- **Provide resources for legal support** and advocacy when volunteers or Organisations face persecution for their work.
- **Recognise higher operational costs** in conflict-affected areas (security measures, insurance, additional support staff, emergency reserves) and fund accordingly.
- **Do not withdraw funding** when situations become dangerous, which abandons local partners when they need support most—instead, adapt programming while maintaining partnership and resource flow.
- **Do not withdraw funding** when situations stabilise, which jeopardises fragile gains—maintain funding through transitions to support long-term peacebuilding.

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Donor duty-of-care and risk-appetite policy reviews
- Humanitarian and development donor consultations on operating in restricted contexts
- Insurance and security-provision framework reviews affecting civil society operations

POLICY WINDOWS:

- No dated windows; this is continuous engagement with individual funders rather than a calendar

CCIVS ACTIONS

- The Secretariat makes the case to funders that protection costs are core costs, not overhead
- Evidence shared by members working in affected contexts helps demonstrate the real costs of protection and strengthens the case for adequate funding.

EU INSTITUTIONS

Policy Leadership

The European Union should strengthen policy coherence between its commitments to youth mobility, global citizenship, climate action, and the recognition of volunteer rights.

OBJECTIVE 01

Inclusive Implementation of EU Mobility Strategies



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

The EU must ensure Schengen visa policies support inclusive youth mobility and do not create disproportionate barriers for young people from Global South countries.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Monitor Member State's** implementation of EU visa legislation and, where breaches of EU law occur, pursue appropriate enforcement measures, including infringement procedures where justified. Promote consistent and non-discriminatory application of visa rules across Member States.
- **Provide visa fee** waivers for all volunteers participating in EU-funded programmes (Erasmus+, ESC, EU Aid Volunteers).
- **Establish monitoring** mechanisms to track visa application outcomes for participants in recognised volunteering programmes, including public reporting and follow-up where patterns of unequal access emerge.
- **Create dedicated or accelerated visa** procedures for recognised IVS organisations, with predictable and transparent processing timelines.
- **Recognise that restrictive visa** practices can undermine the EU's commitments to global citizenship, solidarity, and intercultural dialogue, and improve policy coherence by aligning mobility policies with these objectives.



ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Schengen Visa Code implementation - promoting fair, transparent and non-discriminatory visa procedures for participants in recognised international volunteering programmes
- Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps implementation - influencing programme rules to improve access for volunteers from the Global South

POLICY WINDOWS:

- EU Youth Strategy post-2027 framework - Commission youth dialogues run through 2026 to feed the successor framework; Parliament's CULT implementation report is the immediate entry point. Advocate for commitments on inclusive youth mobility and equal access
- 2028–2034 MFF negotiations (2026–2027) - set out in full under Group B, Objective 1. The specific ask here: funding for measures that reduce financial barriers to international volunteering, including visa support and mobility assistance
- Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps annual work programmes - adopted yearly; the point at which programme rules on access are fixed
- Future revision of the Schengen Visa Code - see Group A, Objective 2

CCIVS ACTIONS:

- The Secretariat raises documented barriers affecting international volunteers with relevant EU institutions and advocates for fairer and more consistent implementation of visa rules
- Evidence shared by members on visa refusals, delays, costs and administrative barriers informs CCIVS advocacy on mobility and equal access to international volunteering

**OBJECTIVE
02****Policy Coherence On Climate,
International Partnerships, and
Youth****WHAT MUST HAPPEN**

The EU should recognise and support the contribution of International Voluntary Service, young people and community-led volunteering within its climate and international partnership policies, ensuring that local communities and civil society are meaningfully involved in actions that affect them.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Recognise IVS and community-based volunteering within relevant EU climate, youth and international partnership policies**, including their contribution to climate action, environmental protection, community resilience and youth participation.
- **Ensure EU programmes provide accessible opportunities and resources for youth and civil society organisations engaged in community-led climate action**, including organisations working at grassroots level.
- **Promote meaningful participation of local communities, young people and civil society organisations** in the design and implementation of relevant EU-funded climate and international partnership initiatives.
- **Support community-led approaches to climate action** that value local knowledge, environmental justice and long-term community participation.
- **Recognise the contribution of IVS to sustainable development**, particularly in relation to education, climate action, peace and partnership.
- **Recognise IVS's role to achieving the SDGs** particularly Goals 4 (quality education), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and 17 (partnerships)—integrate IVS into EU SDG implementation strategies.



POLICY WINDOWS:

- EU youth policy and programme consultations addressing climate action, civic participation and international cooperation
- Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps annual work programmes, where priorities for youth participation, sustainability and volunteering are established
- EU–Africa and other regional partnership dialogues where youth and civil society participation is included
- Relevant EU consultations and stakeholder dialogues on climate action and international partnerships

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Use Living Earth projects, evidence and experiences from CCIVS members to demonstrate the contribution of IVS to community-led climate action
- Promote recognition of IVS and community-based volunteering in relevant EU youth, climate and international partnership discussions
- Bring perspectives from CCIVS members and partner regions into relevant consultations and civil society dialogues
- Coordinate with youth, volunteering, environmental and civil society networks where joint advocacy can strengthen these messages

CCIVS ACTIONS:

- The Secretariat uses evidence and examples from the Living Earth campaign and CCIVS members to advocate for recognition of IVS and community-led volunteering within relevant EU policy discussions
- Members contribute examples of community-led climate action and barriers affecting their participation
- CCIVS works through existing youth, volunteering and civil society networks where collective advocacy provides greater reach and expertise

UN AGENCIES

Global Framework Development

United Nations agencies must support the recognition of volunteer rights within global education, climate, and peacebuilding frameworks, building on the momentum of the 2026 International Year of Volunteers.

01

UNESCO: Leading IVS Recognition



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

As CCIVS's founding partner, UNESCO should continue to support recognition of IVS within relevant education and cultural frameworks.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Strengthen recognition of IVS** within relevant UNESCO education frameworks and initiatives, including:
- **Global Citizenship Education (GCED)** framework
- **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** programmes
- **Recognition of non-formal and informal** learning guidelines
- **Lifelong learning frameworks** and qualifications recognition
- **Support dialogue on approaches for recognising** IVS learning outcomes across different regions and education systems, in cooperation with relevant qualification frameworks.
- **Promote recognition of IVS among UNESCO** Member States as part of national education and youth policies.
- **Position IVS within UNESCO's peace** and reconciliation work, particularly in conflict-affected regions
- **Strengthen UNESCO–CCIVS** cooperation through appropriate institutional support and sustainable partnership mechanisms.
- **Amplify IVS's role in cultural exchange** and intercultural dialogue within UNESCO's cultural programmes.

POLICY WINDOWS:

- UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2030–2035 elaboration — the principal opportunity to embed IVS, and already identified in Phase 3 of the roadmap
- UNESCO General Conference sessions
- Executive Board sessions

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Engage with relevant UNESCO Sectors: Education, Social and Human Sciences, Culture
- Participate in UNESCO conferences and consultations on youth, education, and culture

CCIVS ACTIONS

- Submit input to UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy elaboration
- The Secretariat leads, drawing on CCIVS's standing as a UNESCO-founded network



02

UN VOLUNTEERS (UNV) PROGRAMME: Collaboration and Complementarity



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

UNV should strengthen collaboration with IVS organisations, recognising that IVS and UN volunteering are distinct but complementary approaches to volunteering.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Position IVY 2026** as opportunity to advance ALL forms of volunteering, not only UN-affiliated programmes.
- **Recognise IVS as a valuable form** of volunteering focusing on grassroots, community-led, and socially engaged action.
- **Create partnership frameworks** where UNV and IVS Organisations collaborate on shared goals (volunteer rights, recognition, protection).
- **Ensure IVY 2026 processes** include IVS voice, with CCIVS representation in planning committees and global events.
- **Support dialogue on volunteer rights** that can inform policy discussions among UN Member States.
- **Share learning on volunteer protection**, quality standards, and impact measurement.
- **Ensure support for UNV complements**, rather than replaces or diverts resources from, independent civil society volunteering and IVS.

POLICY WINDOWS:

- **IVD 2025 (December 5, 2025)** - Call to Action launch at UN New York
- **IVY 2026 Global Forum (dates TBD)** - Major gathering of volunteer stakeholders
- **Regional IVY events throughout 2026** - Opportunities for national-level advocacy
- **IVY 2026 Final Declaration (likely December 2026)** - Must include volunteer rights commitments

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Participation in IVY planning processes and working groups
- Regional IVY events and consultations
- Dialogue with UNV on complementary approaches to volunteering and volunteer rights

CCIVS ACTIONS:

- Designate an IVY 2026 focal point for coordination
- Submit formal input to IVY planning processes
- Organise CCIVS network mobilisation around key IVY moments
- Use IVY visibility to amplify volunteer rights advocacy

03

UN HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES:
Protection Frameworks

WHAT MUST HAPPEN

The rights and protection needs of volunteers should be recognised within wider international discussions on human rights, civic space and the protection of civil society actors, particularly in conflict-affected and politically sensitive contexts.

• **SPECIFIC ACTIONS:**

- **Recognise volunteers as legitimate civic actors** contributing to peacebuilding, solidarity, environmental action, human rights and social justice.
- **Strengthen recognition of the protection** needs of volunteers working in conflict-affected, politically sensitive or restrictive environments.
- **Ensure that violations, restrictions** and barriers affecting volunteers can contribute to wider evidence on civic space and civil society participation.
- **Promote protection approaches** that reflect the Volunteer Rights Framework, including safe and rights-based participation, conflict-sensitive preparation, digital security, risk assessment and locally grounded safeguarding and referral mechanisms.

POLICY WINDOWS:

- **Relevant UN discussions on civic space, civil society participation and the protection of people engaged in legitimate civic action**
- **Relevant Human Rights Council discussions and UN consultations where the experiences of volunteers can contribute to wider civil society advocacy**

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Document and communicate recurring problems affecting volunteers, particularly in conflict-affected or politically sensitive contexts**
- **Use evidence from members to raise awareness of gaps in volunteer protection through CCIVS campaigns, reports and policy dialogue**
- **Connect with specialised human rights organisations or civil society partners where an issue requires expertise or action beyond CCIVS's mandate**

CCIVS ACTIONS:

- **Members share documented problems affecting volunteers with CCIVS**
- **CCIVS identifies recurring issues and uses them in its communications and advocacy on the Volunteer Rights Framework**
- **Where a serious issue requires specialised human rights expertise or intervention, CCIVS may refer or raise it with an appropriate partner organisation**

04

UNEP and CLIMATE BODIES: Recognising IVS's Climate Role



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

UN environmental bodies should recognise and support the contribution of IVS as a community-based actor in climate action and ecosystem restoration.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Recognise the contribution of IVS** and community volunteers within relevant reporting and knowledge-sharing processes linked to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.
- **Promote recognition of volunteers'** contributions in national climate commitments (NDCs) as legitimate climate action.
- **Promote funding for community-led** climate action that engages volunteers through multilateral climate finance mechanisms, including the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund.
- **Position IVS within UNEP's** youth engagement strategies as distinct from and complementary to UNEP's direct youth programmes.
- **Ensure climate frameworks** apply principles of environmental justice and support community-led approaches rather than externally imposed solutions.
- **Document and amplify IVS's** role in climate justice movements through UNEP communications and publications.

POLICY WINDOWS:

- UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration mid-term review (2025-2026)
- NDC submission rounds — see Group A, Objective 1

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Engagement with UNEP consultations and stakeholder dialogues on ecosystem restoration and youth engagement
- Participation in international climate and restoration forums where UNEP and partner organisations convene civil society
- Engagement with multilateral climate finance discussions to promote recognition of IVS and community-led action

CCIVS ACTIONS:

- The Secretariat leads engagement with UNEP; regional coordinators supply evidence of volunteer contributions to restoration and adaptation work

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Recognition of Learning

Universities, colleges, and educational authorities should recognise the value of IVS as a complementary approach to experiential, non-formal, and community-based learning, where learning is intentional, organised, and can contribute to positive transformation for individuals, communities, and organisations involved.

Recognition should be available as an option for those who choose to volunteer, never as a mandatory requirement, and should be accessible to volunteers whether or not they are currently enrolled students.

This relationship works in both directions. CCIVS is not only asking universities to recognise IVS learning. CCIVS and its member network can offer universities partnership opportunities, including placement opportunities for students based on shared learning objectives and the network's practical expertise in intercultural communication, safeguarding, and grassroots project management. This can complement the institutional expertise by providing situated and problem-based learning, and introducing the students and academic staff to communities worldwide.

OBJECTIVE 01

Formal Recognition of IVS as Experiential Learning



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

Educational institutions should develop mechanisms to formally recognise learning outcomes from IVS participation.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Award academic credits for IVS participation** based on demonstrated learning outcomes, competencies developed, and time invested .
- **Develop accreditation partnerships** with IVS organisations to:
- **Co-create certification frameworks** that validate skills, competencies, and contributions gained through IVS.
- **Develop pathways for translating IVS learning** outcomes into academic or competency based credentials.
- **Establish criteria for recognition based on** learning objectives and outcomes, not just time spent.

- **Create pathways for IVS** to count toward degrees, considering former volunteer experience and competencies gained, including:
- **Placement years** or practicum requirements
- **Service-learning course** credits
- **Independent study** or directed research credits
- **Capstone projects based on IVS** experience.
- **Recognition within specific degree** programmes (international relations, development studies, environmental science, peace studies, etc.)
- **Develop micro-credentials and digital badges** recognising competencies gained through IVS including intercultural communication, project management, conflict resolution, environmental stewardship, and community organising.
- **Recognise non-formal and informal learning** as complementary and equally valuable to formal classroom education, implementing recognition of prior learning (RPL) frameworks.
- **Value diverse knowledge systems** including Indigenous knowledge, community-based knowledge, and experiential learning approaches that may not fit traditional academic frameworks.
- **Create accessible recognition processes** that help volunteers articulate their learning outcomes, with support through career services, academic advisors, or recognition specialists.
- **Co-design recognition frameworks** that are meaningful and manageable for both institutions.
- **Train faculty and administrators** to understand and value IVS experience in admissions, academic advising, and career counselling.

POLICY WINDOW:

- **Reviews of national qualification frameworks and educational programmes where there are opportunities to strengthen recognition of skills gained through volunteering**

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Engagement with national qualification authorities and academic recognition networks**
- **Partnership with universities already doing this well to create models and case studies**
- **Positioning IVS recognition within broader trends toward competency-based education**

CCIVS ACTIONS:

- **The Secretariat leads on international recognition standards with UNESCO; members pursue institutional partnerships in their own countries**

**OBJECTIVE
02****Research and Knowledge
Production****WHAT MUST HAPPEN**

Educational institutions should support research on IVS that contributes to three complementary objectives:

1. **Gain a better understanding** of IVS practices and the experiences of participants and communities involved
2. **Support the improvement** of IVS programmes and their positive impact on the actors involved
3. **Increase recognition of the unique processes** and outcomes created through the interactions of International Voluntary Service.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- Create research partnerships where IVS organisations have decision-making power over research design, methodologies, and use of findings.
- Support research priorities identified by IVS organisations, volunteers and hosting communities.
- Value diverse forms of knowledge production, not only quantitative studies or peer-reviewed articles.
- Fund participatory action research where volunteers and communities are co-researchers, not just subjects.
- Ensure research does not extract knowledge from volunteers or communities without appropriate recognition, ethical participation, and shared ownership of outcomes
- Make research findings open-access and available in formats useful to practitioners (policy briefs, toolkits, multimedia).

POLICY WINDOW:

- **Research funding calls, where CCIVS or member organisations can shape the terms rather than respond to them**

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

- Academic networks and conferences in international relations, development studies, peace studies and environmental science
- Partnership agreements with individual institutions, which set research ethics and ownership terms case by case

CCIVS ACTIONS

- Commission independent research on the impact of policy reforms achieved (2029)
- Collect case studies and volunteer testimonies documenting lived experience and observed change
- The Secretariat coordinates; members contribute; regional coordinators supply regional data; partner institutions collaborate



PRIVATE SECTOR

Responsible Engagement

This group works on a different logic from the others. There is no policy calendar to target, no budget negotiation, no treaty cycle, no international year. Progress with employers and with commercial volunteering operators comes instead from recognition and standards established elsewhere, and it runs on a longer horizon than the rest of this agenda.

Employer recognition of IVS experience is therefore treated here as a consequence rather than a target. Once IVS learning is validated through national recognition systems and educational credentials, the work set out in Groups A and E - employers follow the frameworks they already use in recruitment. CCIVS's contribution is to make the competencies legible in those frameworks, not to campaign at individual employers.

Commercial volunteering operators can be addressed more directly, but through the organisations that buy and endorse placements, booking platforms, universities and schools, and travel industry associations, rather than through public policy. CCIVS's asset here is its ability to define responsible practice, through the Universal Charter and the IVS Exchange Guidelines, and to see that definition adopted as a condition of purchase.

Both objectives sit in the later phase of this agenda. Through 2028, CCIVS's capacity is committed to the windows identified in Groups A to E; engagement with this group builds on what those secure.

OBJECTIVE 01

Employers Recognise IVS Experience



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

Employers should recognise the value of IVS participation in recruitment, professional development, and workplace culture.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Recognise IVS experience** as relevant work experience in recruitment and career development processes.
- **Value competencies developed through IVS:** including intercultural communication, adaptability, project management, teamwork, problem-solving, and resilience.
- **Encourage workplace policies that enable** employees to participate in IVS, including paid volunteering leave where feasible.
- **Not discriminate against candidates** whose CVs include periods dedicated to volunteering.
- **Support corporate volunteering programmes** that follow responsible volunteering principles, including community leadership, meaningful partnerships, and non-extractive approaches.

OBJECTIVE 02

Voluntourism Companies Adopt Responsible and Ethical Practices



WHAT MUST HAPPEN

Companies offering international volunteering opportunities should eliminate exploitative or extractive models and adopt responsible, community-centred approaches.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **End volunteering models** that commodify community engagement, prioritise volunteer experience over community needs, or create harmful impacts.
- **Ensure international volunteers** complement local capacities and community initiatives rather than replace paid employment or contribute to the substitution of professional roles with unpaid labour.
- **Require meaningful preparation,** safeguarding, and ethical standards for any volunteer programmes.
- **Work with established IVS** organisations and responsible volunteering networks to ensure appropriate standards, safeguarding, and accountability.
- **Ensure volunteer programmes** prioritise community-defined needs rather than primarily serving organisational branding or fundraising objectives.

• SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- **Recognise IVS experience** as relevant work experience in recruitment and career development processes.
- **Value competencies developed** through IVS: including intercultural communication, adaptability, project management, teamwork, problem-solving, and resilience.
- **Encourage workplace policies** that enable employees to participate in IVS, including paid volunteering leave where feasible.
- **Not discriminate against candidates** whose CVs include periods dedicated to volunteering.
- **Support corporate volunteering** programmes that follow responsible volunteering principles, including community leadership, meaningful partnerships, and non-extractive approaches.

PART 2

2025–2030

This roadmap outlines how CCIVS will advance the volunteer rights agenda over the next five years, identifying key actions, responsible actors, and critical policy moments.



01 IVY MOMENTUM

02 INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

03 MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY



PHASE 01

IVY MOMENTUM

2025–2026

PURPOSE

Building visibility and securing institutional commitments during the International Year of Volunteers

KEY ACTIONS



SUCCESS INDICATORS

- At least 10 governments engaged, resulting in documented expressions of support, dialogue, or commitments related to volunteer rights.
- EU-level engagement on improved visa access mechanisms for international volunteering participants.
- UNESCO engagement on recognition of IVS within relevant education and lifelong learning frameworks.
- 3+ foundations commit to advancing equitable and decolonised funding practices.
- Volunteer rights language in IVY 2026 Final Declaration

PHASE 02

INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

2026–2028**PURPOSE**

Building on IVY momentum to secure policy reforms and institutional commitments

KEY ACTIONS**MFF NEGOTIATIONS
2026–2028**

- Priority advocacy target: Advocate for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps reforms within the next MFF generation
- Track European Parliament and Council negotiations; submit amendments through MEP allies
- Coordinate with other youth and civil society networks for collective advocacy
- Maintain regular engagement with DG EAC, DG INTPA and other relevant European Commission services, as well as Members of the European Parliament and Council representatives, to monitor developments in the MFF negotiations.
- Mobilise CCIVS membership for advocacy moments (committee votes, public consultations)

**NATIONAL RECOGNITION
2027**

- Support member Organisations in 10+ countries to advocate for national volunteer recognition systems
- Develop toolkit and templates for national advocacy (model legislation, talking points, case studies)
- Create peer-learning network for Organisations engaged in national advocacy
- Document progress, challenges and lessons learned for collective learning

PHASE 02

INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

RECOGNITION OF IVS LEARNING WITH UNESCO 2027–2028

- Engage with UNESCO and relevant partners to explore approaches for recognising IVS learning outcomes internationally.
- Present findings at UNESCO General Conference or another appropriate convening

FUNDING REFORM ONGOING

- Annual bilateral engagement with major foundations reviewing progress on Decolonisation commitments
- Publish periodic analysis of funding practices and equity indicators among relevant funders.
- Support Global South members to access funding through mentoring and technical assistance
- Build coalition with other movements (climate justice, feminist, Indigenous rights) on funding justice

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Documented inclusion of IVS-related priorities in discussions and reforms concerning Erasmus+ and ESC within the MFF 2028–2034 process
- National volunteer recognition systems established in 5+ countries
- Progress towards internationally recognised approaches for recognising IVS learning outcomes
- 50% increase in funding to Global South IVS organisations
- Documented reduction in visa refusal rates for IVS volunteers



PHASE 03

MONITORING & ACCOUNTABILITY

2028–2030

PURPOSE

Tracking progress, holding stakeholders accountable and positioning volunteer rights within post-2030 frameworks

2028

MID-TERM REVIEW

- Publish comprehensive review of progress on volunteer rights (2025-2028)
- Highlight progress, identify gaps, and communicate areas where further action is needed
- Convene global consultation with CCIVS membership on strategic adjustments
- Update advocacy priorities based on what's working

2029

EVIDENCE & IMPACT

- Commission independent research on impact of policy reforms achieved
- Document volunteer testimonies showing real-world changes
- Produce case studies of good practice in recognition, mobility, protection
- Disseminate findings widely to influence next generation of policies

2029–2030

POST-2030 POSITIONING

- Engage with UN processes developing post-2030 development framework (successor to SDGs)
- Ensure volunteer rights embedded in next generation global frameworks
- Position IVS within UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy 2030-2035
- Explore opportunities for future international volunteer initiatives, including any successor or follow-up processes to IVY 2026, with volunteer rights integrated from the outset

ONGOING

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Biennial progress reports tracking institutional action against commitments
- Public dashboard showing which governments/institutions are acting vs. failing
- Annual stakeholder convenings to review progress and adjust strategies
- Support member organisations facing retaliation for advocacy work

PHASE 03

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

BY 2030

01

MOBILITY, RECOGNITION & FUNDING

Measurable improvement in mobility, recognition and access to funding

02

GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS

Volunteer-rights language included in post-2030 frameworks

03

CCIVS LEADERSHIP

CCIVS recognised as a leading international voice on volunteer rights

04

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable funding secured for ongoing advocacy work

05

EVIDENCE BASE

Strong evidence of the contribution of International Voluntary Service to peace, climate and justice

RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

ROLES ACROSS THE CCIVS NETWORK

ACTION AREA	SECRETARIAT	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

PART III

MONITORING, ACCOUNTABILITY & NEXT STEPS

How CCIVS will track progress, respond to gaps and turn institutional commitments into lasting change.

01

TRACK

02

ASSESS

03

RESPOND

04

RESOURCE



A. TRACKING PROGRESS

CCIVS will monitor progress towards implementation through:

ANNUAL REPORTING AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

01 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS

- Assess developments and actions taken by relevant stakeholder groups (governments, funders, EU institutions, UN agencies, educational institutions). Document commitments secured and reforms achieved
- Identify remaining gaps, challenges, and areas requiring further action.
- Highlight progress and recognise good practice
- Published every June, timed with advocacy calendar

02 PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY DASHBOARD

- Online tracker showing progress on selected indicators and commitments by country and institution where sufficient information is available
- Progress categories: implemented, commitment made/in progress, and limited or no documented progress.
- Updated quarterly with input from CCIVS membership

REPORTING RHYTHM



A. TRACKING PROGRESS

LEARNING THROUGH DIALOGUE

CONVENINGS AND MEMBER FEEDBACK

03 BIENNIAL STAKEHOLDER CONVENINGS

- Gather governments, funders, UN agencies, and IVS Organisations
- Review progress against this framework
- Adjust strategies based on what's working
- Secure new commitments for next period
- First convening: 2027 (mid-way through Phase 2)

04 MEMBER FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

- Annual survey of CCIVS membership on barriers faced and changes observed
- Regional consultations capturing diverse experiences
- Case study collection documenting real-world impact of reforms
- Collection of volunteer testimonies documenting lived experiences and changes observed.



B. SUCCESS INDICATORS

The indicators below describe the systemic changes CCIVS expects to observe by 2030. Progress will be assessed against evidence collected through the monitoring mechanisms set out in Section A, including annual reporting, member surveys, policy mapping and stakeholder commitments

MOBILITY

- Documented reduction in mobility barriers experienced by IVS organisations, including visa refusals, delays, costs and administrative burdens.
- Increase in the number of countries that formally recognise IVS within national policy frameworks
- Improved transparency and predictability of visa processing procedures for IVS participants.
- Visa costs reduced or waived in 15+ countries

RECOGNITION

- Increased number of countries implementing or developing volunteer recognition mechanisms
- International guidance or cooperation mechanisms supporting recognition of IVS learning outcomes are developed or strengthened
- 50+ educational institutions recognising IVS learning through academic credits or other formal mechanisms.
- IVS experience valued by employers in hiring processes

FUNDING

- Increased proportion of EU youth funding accessible to and reaching Global South-led Organisations.
- At least 5 major foundations adopt documented measures to improve equity and accessibility in funding practices.
- Public funding for IVS doubled in 10+ countries
- Reduced financial barriers to participation for volunteers from low-income and underrepresented contexts

B. SUCCESS INDICATORS

WHAT CHANGE SHOULD BE VISIBLE?

PROTECTION, CLIMATE AND PARTICIPATION**PROTECTION**

- Comprehensive protection protocols in place for conflict-zone volunteering
- Increased availability of protection mechanisms and rapid support pathways for volunteers facing serious risks
- Increased integration of mental health and psychosocial support mechanisms across IVS programmes
- Digital security training accessible to all volunteers in sensitive contexts

CLIMATE

- Increased recognition of IVS contributions within national climate action planning, implementation and reporting processes
- Funding for community-led climate action increased 3x
- Strengthened safeguards to prevent environmentally harmful or community-exclusionary approaches in IVS climate-related initiatives.

PARTICIPATION

- Meaningful youth representation within CCIVS governance structures
- 100+ Organisations implementing youth governance commitments
- Intergenerational dialogue standard practice in IVS sector

C. ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

When insufficient progress is observed

CCIVS will:

WHEN PROGRESS IS INSUFFICIENT

- Coordinate collective response through IVS networks and allied movements
- Use appropriate advocacy channels, including public communication, UN mechanisms, and coalition-based advocacy.
- Support member organisations facing consequences for speaking truth to power
- Document systematically for evidence-based advocacy and accountability

WHEN PROGRESS IS ACHIEVED

- Highlight and amplify reforms and commitments secured
- Recognise champions among governments, funders, and institutions taking bold action
- Share learning so successful approaches can be replicated
- Build on momentum to advance next-level reforms

PRINCIPLE

Accountability combines public pressure, practical support, evidence and recognition of progress.

D. CALL TO COMMITMENTS

CCIVS calls on all stakeholders to make specific, time-bound commitments that advance the recognition, protection and strengthening of International Voluntary Service.

GOVERNMENTS

- Commit to recognising the contribution of volunteering and community action within relevant climate policy processes, including NDC-related discussions where appropriate.
- Commit to developing a national volunteer recognition system as part of national policy and legislative frameworks.
- Commit to increasing sustainable public investment in IVS infrastructure and support mechanisms.

EUROPEAN UNION

- Commit to ensuring that the design of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps within the MFF 2028–2034 framework strengthens global accessibility, equity, and participation of organisations from underrepresented regions
- Commit to reviewing Quality Label requirements and implementation procedures to identify and remove unnecessary barriers for organisations from partner regions, particularly smaller and less-resourced organisations
- Commit to improving visa access for participants in EU-funded youth programmes, including exploring fee waivers, simplified procedures, and clearer support mechanisms for international volunteers
- Commit to increasing the accessibility of EU youth funding for Global South organisations through simplified procedures, equitable partnership models, and measures to reduce structural barriers to participation

Commitments should identify a responsible institution, deadline and evidence of delivery.

D. CALL TO COMMITMENTS

A SHARED INSTITUTIONAL AGENDA

UN AGENCIES, FUNDERS AND EDUCATION

UN AGENCIES

- UNESCO: Commit to supporting the recognition of IVS learning and contribution within relevant education, lifelong learning, and youth frameworks, including through dialogue on recognition approaches
- UNV: Commit to meaningful collaboration with CCIVS and IVS organisations, ensuring that grassroots and community-based volunteering perspectives contribute to global volunteering discussions and future international volunteering initiatives
- UNEP and relevant climate bodies: Commit to recognising the contribution of volunteers and community-led initiatives within ecosystem restoration and climate action frameworks
- UN Human Rights Bodies: Commit to strengthening recognition and protection of volunteers engaged in legitimate civic action, human rights, peacebuilding, and environmental protection

FUNDERS

- Commit to reviewing and improving funding practices to address structural inequalities, including adopting measurable equity and accessibility measures
- Commit to increasing transparency on funding distribution, including analysis of geographic reach and accessibility for organisations from underrepresented regions
- Commit to supporting climate justice initiatives that are community-led and recognise the legitimacy of rights-based and advocacy-oriented approaches
- Commit to increasing access to flexible, multi-year funding models that provide greater sustainability for community-based organisations

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- Commit to exploring and developing recognition pathways for IVS learning outcomes, including academic credits, micro-credentials, or other formal recognition mechanisms
- Commit to developing partnerships with IVS organisations to pilot recognition approaches and experiential learning opportunities
- Commit to increasing awareness among faculty and academic staff of the value of experiential, non-formal, and informal learning
- Commit to monitoring and communicating progress on recognition of IVS learning opportunities

E. RESOURCES NEEDED

Full implementation of this agenda would require additional capacity beyond the current Secretariat resources. Until dedicated funding is secured, advocacy coordination is led by the Executive Committee and the Advocacy Working Group, supported by the CCIVS freelance pool on a project basis and by the Secretariat where needed, in line with the lean Secretariat model established in the CCIVS Strategic Plan. The following describes the resources that would be required to implement this agenda at full scale.

Resourcing this ambition at full scale would require:

- Dedicated advocacy coordination capacity (1 FTE) to lead policy engagement, coordinate campaigns, and track progress.
- Regional advocacy support capacity to strengthen member Organisations' engagement in national and regional advocacy processes.
- Research and documentation capacity for evidence-based advocacy and impact tracking.
- Communications capacity for public campaigns, media engagement, stakeholder outreach.
- Travel budget for bilateral meetings, conference participation, member support
- Translation services to ensure accessibility across languages.
- Access to legal expertise and referral mechanisms for volunteers and Organisations facing legal risks related to their activities.

Estimated annual budget: TBD

Funding strategy:

- Seek multi-year core funding from foundations aligned with the volunteer rights agenda.
- Apply for project-specific funding for IVY 2026 mobilisation.
- Explore complementary income streams through training and consultancy related to volunteer rights and responsible volunteering.
- Mobilise member contributions for advocacy campaigns.
- Explore partnership opportunities with UN agencies and UNESCO for initiatives aligned with shared priorities.

CONCLUSION

FROM RIGHTS TO REALITY

CCIVS COMMITMENT

International Voluntary Service has always been about more than individual experience. It is a movement for peace, solidarity, and justice, a living practice based on the belief that collective wellbeing and justice are connected across borders, identities, and contexts.

The volunteer rights are not aspirational ideals. They are minimum standards necessary to make that vision real. They are grounded in decades of collective struggle within the IVS movement and reflect what volunteers, Organisations, and communities have long known: that the existing systems continue to create unequal access, concentrate opportunities among those with greater resources, and reproduce barriers that volunteering seeks to overcome.

This Advocacy Platform and Agenda is both mirror and map. It reflects honestly where we are, addressing visa barriers linked to unequal mobility patterns, funding systems where decision-making power remains concentrated, recognition mechanisms that dismiss experiential learning, and protection gaps that endanger those working for justice. It also maps where we must go—toward systems that enable universal participation, equitable resource distribution, formal recognition of diverse learning, and comprehensive protection for all who stand in solidarity with communities facing oppression.

The designation of 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development creates unprecedented political opportunity. The climate crisis demands community-led responses in which volunteers play essential roles. Shrinking civic space threatens the very possibility of cross-border solidarity. Democratic backsliding places volunteers at greater risk. Against this backdrop, CCIVS refuses to accept that volunteering remains a privilege rather than a right.

CONCLUSION

FROM RIGHTS TO REALITY

This framework establishes what CCIVS demands:

- Governments must address discriminatory visa barriers and create legal frameworks that recognise, protect, and support IVS.
- Funders must transform funding mechanisms, address structural inequalities, and increase decision-making power and resources for Global South Organisations.
- Educational institutions must recognise IVS as legitimate learning, and award formal credentials.
- The EU must reform its youth programmes to genuinely include rather than symbolically gesture toward global participation.
- UN agencies must position volunteer rights within global frameworks on education, climate, peace, and human rights.

CCIVS commitments:

- Leading coordinated advocacy across multiple institutional levels and policy arenas.
- Supporting member Organisations in national-level policy engagement.
- Tracking progress and promoting accountability through transparent reporting.
- Building coalitions with allied movements for collective power.
- Documenting impact, recognising progress, and identifying areas where further action is needed.
- Ensuring CCIVS's own practices model the decolonial, inclusive, and participatory values we demand of others.

The volunteer rights framework establishes what volunteers can expect:

Participation in International Voluntary Service will look fundamentally different. Volunteers will cross borders through fair, accessible visa systems. Their learning will be formally recognised by educational institutions and employers. Funding will reach Organisations in all regions with decision-making power shared equitably. Those working in conflict zones will have comprehensive protection. Climate justice contributions will be valued within national and international frameworks. Youth voices will shape organisational strategy and program design. IVS will be embedded in policy as legitimate and essential civic infrastructure.

CONCLUSION: FROM RIGHTS TO REALITY

CCIVS makes this commitment:

We will continue to advocate when volunteers face mobility barriers linked to unequal visa systems.

We will not accept funding systems that exclude our Global South members.

We will continue to challenge recognition systems that undervalue experiential and non-formal learning.

We will not abandon volunteers facing persecution for their solidarity work.

We will not compromise on the principle that volunteering is a right, not a privilege.

We call on governments, funders, educational institutions, and international bodies to join us in this commitment. The stakes are too high and the moment too urgent for anything less than transformative action.

**From rights to reality:
The journey begins now.**



ANNEXES

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS, POLICY FRAMEWORKS, GLOSSARY, CONTACTS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A

REFERENCES

B

FRAMEWORKS

C

GLOSSARY

D

CONTACTS

E

CCIVS

ANNEX A

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

This Policy Framework builds on existing CCIVS commitments and sector-wide guidance:

CCIVS Strategic Documents:

- CCIVS Strategic Plan 2021-2027: [Stronger Together](#)
- White Paper on International Voluntary Service: [Link](#)
- Universal Charter of International Voluntary Service 2018: [Link](#)
- CCIVS Constitution: [Link](#)
- CCIVS Political and Ethical Charter 2025 (forthcoming)

CCIVS Impact and Evidence:

- CCIVS Impact Measurement Report 2010-2020: [Link](#)
- Voices for Change Needs Assessment (2025)
- Voices for Change Global Reflection Meeting Report: [Link](#)

CCIVS Operational Guidance:

- IVS Exchange Guidelines: [Link](#)
- Volunteering in Conflict Areas Toolkit: [Link](#)
- CCIVS Living Earth Sustainability Guidelines (forthcoming)

CCIVS Thematic Position Papers:

- Freedom of Movement: A Position Paper: [Link](#)
- IVS4Peace Policy Recommendations: [Link](#)
- Soil4Life Manifesto: [Link](#)
- Decolonising Visa Mechanisms Policy Paper: [Link](#)
- Decolonising Funding Mechanisms of EU Youth Programmes: [Link](#)

CCIVS Thematic Initiatives:

- Decolonise Initiative: ccivs.org/decolonise
- Living Earth Initiative: ccivs.org/livingearth
- Regenerate Reconcile Initiative: [Link](#)
- Voices for Change Project: ccivs.org/voices-for-change

Critical Analysis and Research:

- The Power Behind Good Intentions: [Link](#)
- Decolonial Practice and Discourse in International Voluntary Service: [Link](#)
- Volunteer Rights Inquiry Final Report (UK): [Link](#)

ANNEX B

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL & POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The volunteer rights outlined in this framework are aligned with and supported by existing international commitments:

Human Rights Frameworks:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 20 & 23) - rights to peaceful assembly and work
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - freedom of movement and association
- Convention on the Rights of the Child - youth participation rights

Regional Mobility Frameworks:

- African Union Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons
- ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons (West Africa)
- Similar regional protocols in CEMAC, CEEAC, SADC (Africa)
- EU Youth Mobility Strategy

Education and Recognition Frameworks:

- UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education
- European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
- Regional qualification frameworks (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America)
- UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education

Climate and Environment:

- Paris Agreement on Climate Change
- UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

Youth and Volunteering:

- UN Plan of Action on Youth (2022 onwards)
- 2026 International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development
- World Programme of Action for Youth

Sustainable Development:

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs
- Particularly Goals 4 (Education), 13 (Climate), 16 (Peace), 17 (Partnerships)

ANNEX C

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

COMMUNITY, POWER AND ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY-LED

Approaches where local communities define priorities, make decisions, and lead implementation, with external actors (including volunteers) playing supporting roles based on community direction.

**DECOLONIAL /
DECOLONISATION**

Active process of identifying and dismantling systems, structures, and mindsets rooted in colonialism that continue to privilege Global North actors, knowledge systems, and approaches while marginalizing Global South perspectives and leadership.

GLOBAL SOUTH

Term used critically to highlight structural inequalities in global systems of power, recognising its limitations while using it to name patterns of exclusion that affect countries and communities historically marginalized in international relations and development frameworks.

**GREEN
COLONIALISM**

Environmental projects or policies imposed on communities without their consent, often displacing people for "conservation" or extracting resources for "green technology" while reproducing colonial patterns of land dispossession and external control.

ANNEX C

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

MOBILITY, LEARNING, SOLIDARITY AND RIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE (IVS)	Organises volunteer exchanges and programmes that bring people across borders to work in solidarity with communities on shared challenges, characterised by reciprocity, community partnership, and commitment to social justice rather than service delivery alone.
PASSPORT PRIVILEGE	Unequal global mobility rights where citizens of wealthy, primarily Global North countries face minimal visa barriers while citizens of Global South countries encounter restrictive, expensive, and discriminatory visa requirements.
RECOGNITION OF LEARNING	Formal validation and certification of skills, competencies, and knowledge gained through IVS participation, making them visible and valued in educational and professional contexts.
SOLIDARITY	Principle of mutual support grounded in shared struggle and interconnected liberation, distinct from charity or service—recognising that working for justice benefits all parties.
VOLUNTEER RIGHTS	Minimum standards ensuring that all IVS participants can engage safely, with dignity, recognition, and protection—regardless of their origin, identity, or economic circumstance.

ANNEX D

STAKEHOLDER CONTACT POINTS

European Union Institutions:

- DG Education and Culture (DG EAC): ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture
- DG International Partnerships (DG INTPA): ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships
- European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education (CULT): europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/cult

UN Agencies:

- UNESCO Education Sector: unesco.org/en/education
- UN Volunteers Programme: unv.org
- UN Environment Programme (UNEP): unep.org
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): ohchr.org

International Year of Volunteers 2026:

- Forum-IDS (Civil Society Coordination): forum-ids.org
- UN IVY 2026 Focal Point: [To be established]

Regional Bodies:

- African Union Youth Division: au.int/en/youth
- European Youth Forum: youthforum.org
- Commonwealth Youth Programme: thecommonwealth.org/youth

ANNEX E

CCIVS MEMBERSHIP AND CONTACT

About CCIVS:

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

Contact:

- Website: ccivs.org
- Email: secretariat@ccivs.org
- Address: UNESCO House, 1 rue Miollis, 75015 Paris, France

Join the movement:

Organisations interested in CCIVS membership or partnership on volunteer rights advocacy should contact: secretariat@ccivs.org

Acknowledgments:

This Policy Framework was developed through the Voices for Change project (2024-2026), co-funded by the Eralsus + programme of the European Union. It reflects the collective wisdom and lived experiences of volunteers, organisations, and communities across the CCIVS global network.

Partners involved: Voices for Change is a project coordinated by the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS), in partnership with the International Music Council (France), GSM-Youth Services Centerit (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 (Czech Republic), Fundación Proyecto Ecológico Chiriboga (Ecuador), and the Palestinian Center for Media, Research and Development (Palestine).

Special thanks to:

- All participants in the Voices for Change Global Reflection Meeting (April 2025)
- CCIVS member organisations who contributed case studies, testimonies, and strategic input
- The Voices for Change consortium partners
- Policy and Advocacy Expert: Silja Fischer
- Impact Measurement Expert: Francesco Volpini
- CCIVS Director: Vicky Lovelock
- CCIVS Secretariat team



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Project partners: GSM-Youth Services Centerit (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 (Czech Republic), Fundación Proyecto Ecológico Chiriboga (Ecuador), and the Palestinian Center for Media, Research and Development (Palestine).

Design: Julieta Blanco
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