

# NEWSLETTER

December 2023



► Photo by Krystallenia Batziou

## WHAT KIND OF YEAR WAS 2023 FOR YOU, ALL?



All of us were in difficult situations until last year. We think the world of IVS and our lives were feeling very critical due to the Corona and the wars.

This year, some of you may feel that life is slowly returning to the way it was before. Others may have been hit by new challenges, such as terrorist attacks or disasters and so on.

At the end of the year, let us reflect on our activities and lives this year. And do what we can do, little by little, together to make the world as peaceful as possible next year!



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# ACTIVITY REPORTS

## FRAME(V) WORK

By Thazin Aung, GIVE

### >>> WHAT'S HAPPENED IN ZIMBABWE?

The African lab from Frame (v) work project was organized in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe from 21st to 26th September 2023. There were 35 representatives from IVS networks and organizations, 2 from Asia, 1 from Latin America, 8 from Europe and 24 from Africa. There were 6 representatives from IVS networks involved in the program including NVDA. The participants shared best practices of the projects in the African Region and planned how to improve the quality of volunteer exchange, harmonize the working procedures and enhance south-south cooperation.



### >>> WHAT'S THE CHALLENGE?

It was the first time for Thazin to travel Africa and the most challenging part was the travel issue as there were several transfer to get there. Though the initial destination was to Victoria Falls, the meeting place, she first arrived to Harare because of the difficult situation of the transfer issue. The good chance out of difficulty was that she got an opportunity to visit their project site, meet with local volunteers and travel together for 11 hours from Harare to meeting place. The hospitality of the host and the African members were as warmth as the Asians so she didn't face any culture shock. It was also same for weather that was as hot as in Myanmar. The food was also common; bread, noodles and rice however there's new food introduced to her that is called Sadza. There were several discussion topics during the sessions and the topics that attracted her most were gender issue in Africa and in workcamp, diet plan and their customs, fund issue and networking.

### >>> VISIT TSUNGIRIRA WELFARE ORGANIZATION

Thazin Aung, General secretary of NVDA joined the program as a part of the network and the member organization, GIVE. On the arrival day before the program started, Vitalis from the Zimbabwe Workcamp Association sent NVDA General Secretary to their partner organization named Tsungirira Welfare Organization for the project visit. There they have Early Child Care Development Program with around 40 kids, food distribution activity to slam community, agriculture activity and other volunteering activity as well. For the moment, one international volunteer joins as a long term volunteer. The director of the organization showed around the project site and explained about their program. There they have a future project for food security and livelihood support and would like to receive the initiative international volunteers to work together.





# MEMBERS NEWS

## HONG KONG & AUSTRARIA & THAILAND

### VOLTRA, HONG KONG

#### >>> FISHERFOLK CULTURE VILLAGE



The long-awaited Hong Kong workcamp has finally returned after few years of pandemic! And it is also the first time for our Cultural Facilitators to be the camp leader! This international workcamp brought together more than 50 participants from 13 places, including Macau, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, South Korea, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia, the Philippines, Peru, Kenya, and Russia.

In just 6 days, the workcamp with a focus on community and sustainable living had a very rich program. Participants not only experienced the life of fishermen in the Fisherfolk Culture Village on Lamma Island, but also visited Tai Kwun and the Hong Kong Palace Museum to learn about Hong Kong's history and culture. They also went deeper into organic farming at Winnie The Farm. Lastly, they enthusiastically shared their cultures and various hometown snacks to public at the cultural booth of "VolTra Market"!

We believe that all participants and Cultural Facilitators have left unforgettable and valuable memories in this short time. We look forward to more extraordinary encounters in the future, and please stay tuned for more exciting activities from VolTra.



Song and Anong came from Laos and arrived in Goulburn by train on Wednesday evening. The project that they came for, Bungendore Show, was cancelled on the previous Sunday. With such short notice we were scrambling for ideas to fill their time and give them a good experience. It also meant there was no accommodation for them, hence they were housed at Rita's place.

Rita emailed environment groups to ask if they have any useful work for two volunteers. Fortunately, we know that these two volunteers are good workers as they were at the Goulburn Show in March this year. There were many challenges and many changes of plan as the people around us came up with ideas or cancelled previous arrangements. We had to remain flexible throughout their stay.

On the first day we put up posters around town for the launch of IVP's new project, **Goulburn Farmers Market**.



On day two, we drove 50 km to Stonequarry Cemetery, IVP's bush regeneration project from several years ago. Stephen Horn joined us to take out the remaining tree guards and stakes with we then loaded into Stephen's car. They will be stored for future use.



Saturday 21st: Anong and Song helped at the Wetlands Project in Goulburn under guidance of a local volunteer. First, they set up a picnic area, then shovelled bark mulch into a trailer for transporting to several historic Goulburn cemeteries. The following day they worked at these two cemeteries, mowing and spreading mulch.

Monday 23rd. Anong and Song helped with more tasks in preparation for the launch of the Farmers Market. We put up large banners and signs around town, washed down tables and packed them ready for transport. A visit to Goulburn Show Office in the afternoon allowed Song and Anong to reconnect with some of the Australian volunteers they had worked with back in March.

We were surprised to receive in the mail, a certificate from the NSW State Parliament, via our local Member, saying 'State Recognition of Goulburn Farmers Market'. We made a little video about it which we shared on [here](#). Journalist John Thistleton arrived to interview us for the digital newsletter About Regional. and his article can be found [here](#).



Early the next morning, we drove 50km to Crookwell and arrived in plenty of time for the welcome and orientation for a project to restore wildlife corridors for various species of gliders. This is part of the Glideways Project funded by the World Wildlife Fund. 1000 trees were in the ground and watered by 4pm. Anong and Song really enjoyed the work and were very happy.

On Friday 27th we worked on preparations for the Farmers Market and then on Saturday we started work at 6am at the market site. Anong helped other local volunteers with setting up while Rita was kept busy with radio interviews. At 8am Mayor Peter Walker gave a speech and cut a ribbon. We held back the crowds until this little ceremony took place. There were 20 stalls with fresh local produce and 1500 shoppers making the launch an overwhelming success.



It was great for the Farmers Market to have the help of Anong and Song. Local environment groups were very pleased to have their assistance and the whole experience proved to be good PR for IVP and future cooperation with host organisations.

## DALAA, THAILAND

### >>> DALAA 19TH ANIVERSARY FAMILY WORKCAMP

This time it was an international work camp with volunteers from eleven countries, including Thailand. When going to the program and tasks on daily basis, We divided the volunteers into specific tasks when we went to the activities, allowed each person to choose a task according to their level of voluntary service and potential; during the anniversary camp, we organized a variety of active learning and physical activities; learn how to build a Clay house and decorate beautiful house that could made us feel more harmonious and more creative working together, learn how to plant a kitchen garden and taking care of them and the previous plants as well for to be more realize how the good food is glowing and how the important we are relying on the clean soil, water including the intense weather of nowadays that might be a cause of the climate change.



Moreover, we had great fun doing activities with the local kids during their holidays as we divided our volunteers into 4 groups so that we could learn more about their working style and how to be good team workers. The activities with kids were conducted in a creative and fun way: recreation games by dancing, sports by group players, drawing, and so on. In addition to the workshops we did together, there were so many different things: lighting drawings for getting a photo, a climate change bingo game and discussion, general knowledge testing, an action game to guess an answer, and art decoration.

Last but not least, we had learned to live and also had responsibilities to each other, at least to do a daily task like cooking and cleaning the bathroom, both outside and inside our hearts. (Mimie, Thailand)

◀ Photo by Krystallenia Batziou

# IVS STARTING STORIES

## DALAA, THAILAND

By Alex Bechetoille

### >>> THE BEGINNING

As one of the founders of Dalaa association, I would like to share with you a summary of this life experience. All started after a few of us have been volunteering in the IVS organization named Greenway in Thailand. For me, I had worked with Greenway for seven months in 2003, a year before starting Dalaa. The main founder of DaLaa, named Sakkarin Seema, was proposed to start a new IVS organization by the advice of the organizations from the network. Sakkarin approached me and other friends with the idea of starting a new organization, and I enthusiastically agreed. It felt like an open door to something I believed in and wanted to be a part of. We had other members who were highly motivated to join us. We were just a small group at the beginning, and some of the original team members are still in touch today.

We started by having a few meetings, gathering around twenty people. Our goal was clear: to figure out what we wanted to achieve and how to make it happen. We aimed for a unique approach compared to other organizations. We wanted to maintain equality within the organization, with no president or vice president. It was crucial for us to have this equality in decision-making. A few months later, we formed a committee to decide who would be part of the core team, with the rest becoming active members. Our primary aim was "long-lasting social development," while our secondary aims were "Support, Friendship, and preserving nature and culture". We initiated a few workcamps in 2005 and more regularly in the following years, receiving support from the CCIVS network and other organizations around the world from the SCI and NVDA networks.

### >>> STRUCTURED PERIOD

During the first four years, I and other core members held different jobs while also working on Dalaa. In 2006, we hired someone with a small salary to handle workcamp leader task. This marked the beginning of Dalaa becoming more structured.

In 2008, we decided to become an officially registered association in Thailand, which led to a change in our name to "Dalaa, International for Social Development Association." moving to a two-floor house with four full-time workers. Over time, we faced the challenge of balancing our initial commitment to equality with the reality of leadership roles emerging within the organization. We gradually focus more and more on middle and long term placements.



**LIVING  
TOGETHER,  
WORKING  
TOGETHER,  
LEARNING  
TOGETHER.**







**WE BELIEVE THAT  
SMALL IS  
BEAUTIFUL, AND  
OUR FOCUS IS ON  
CREATING A DEEP  
AND MEANINGFUL  
IMPACT IN THE  
AREAS WE WORK  
IN.**



## TRANSITION

On my side, I was still the secretary until 2011, working as a volunteer in DaLaa, contributing to Dalaa during my free time. I decided then to stop my job as a teacher and to be fully involved as the MLTV coordinator since the end of 2011. Quite some years later, and after having taken care of many volunteers, organizing projects and improving our organization strength and quality all together with so many important people, I became the president of the organization when Sakkarin left in 2019, and it felt like a natural transition for me.

## MY ROLE

My initial motivation in 2003 for getting involved in volunteer work in Thailand was driven by a desire to challenge societal norms and find answers to why I disagreed with many aspects of society. I sought a life with less stress and more freedom, and I found these in the villages of northeast Thailand. It was a relief from the stress I had experienced during my student life.

I wanted to be an active participant in creating positive change rather than just advocating for it. I believed there was something wrong with society, and I wanted to contribute to making it better.

Currently, my role in the organization involves mentoring and inspiring others. I work on connecting individuals who share a passion for positive change and supporting them in their learning journeys. I find fulfillment in helping volunteers and hosts recognize their potential and willingness to make a difference.

## UNIQUE FOCUS OF DALAA

Dalaa's unique approach sets us apart. While many other organizations focus on expanding networks or creating new workcamps, we emphasize building strong communication with local partners and focus on the personal improvement of volunteers even often at a spiritual level. We believe that small is beautiful, and our focus is on creating a deep and meaningful impact in the areas we work in.

Looking ahead, I plan to continue expanding our network, supporting those who are making a difference or have great ideas and the right attitude. My goal is to provide strength and inspiration through volunteering. While I don't know how many more years I'll continue in this role, I'm open to passing the torch to someone ready for it when the time is right.

In conclusion, I believe that changing oneself is the first step towards creating a better world. Being true to oneself and working on personal growth is essential. Clearing the internal obstacles allows us to shine brightly and positively impact the world around us.

**WE CAN SEE  
IMPACT ON  
THE  
COMMUNITIES,**

# IVS IMPACT STORIES

**INDONESIA DJ & NEPAL FFN**

**-These are examples of impact on Members' Projects in 2022 from NVDA annual report-**

## »»» DJ, INDONESIA

***Volunteers Companion***, 22 November 2022.

Dejavato held a Volunteers Companion (Volscom) in Detekon view, Semarang. The volunteers received all the materials, such as companion procedure, city tours and basic Indonesia, from the Dejavato staff. This activity aimed to involve local volunteers in international voluntary service. It is also the opportunity to introduce Indonesian culture and uniqueness to foreign volunteers.

***English Weekend Camp***, 15-16 October 2022.

It was 22 participants join this project. This activity aimed to improve the participants' language skills and encourage the local people to learn English. Not only that but also to connect the participants with the local community so that the locals can promote its social, cultural, educational, and environmental activities to the participants. With the hope that it will advance the economic and tourism potential in Duren village, Bandungan sub-district.

## »»» FFN, NEPAL

***Daman International work camp*** 05 to 19 August, 2022.

Plantation work volunteers enjoyed with local people and school children's in school. Daman community, we plant trees against global warming.

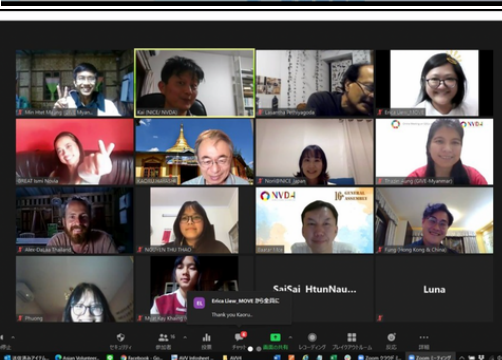
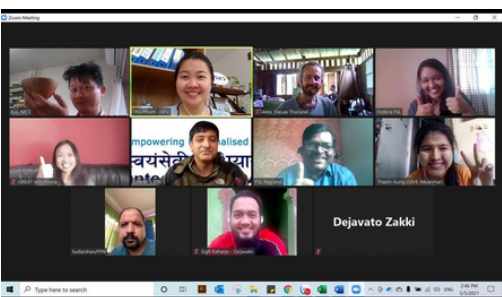
**IMPACT ON  
THE  
VOLUNTEERS**





**\*THEY ARE JUST  
EXAMPLES AND  
MORE PROJECTS  
ARE ORGANIZED BY  
MEMBERS NGOS.**

**\*DATES ARE  
INDICATED BY  
MONTH/DATE  
ORDER(2024)**



# MEMBERS UPCOMING PROJECTS

## >>> NICE, JAPAN

**Ozuchi** : 02/10-16 Revive the countryside and beautiful village by maintenance of the fields. You can enjoy very beautiful nature and traditional Japanese culture!

**Ikata** : 02/24-03/08 Let's support mandarin farming in edge of peninsula!

**Akame** : 03/11-21 Working in SATOYAMA forest !

## >>> VIN, NEPAL

**Tarakeshwor / Okharpauwa / Kavresthali** : 01/08-19 Children's Winter Camp.

## >>> FFN, NEPAL

**Daman** : 01/06-19, 02/06-19 Teaching locals to think in new and different ways is their benefit, learning from their unique way of life is yours.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## >>> ASIAN VOLUNTEERS VOICE & MONTHLY MEMBERS MEETING WILL COME BACK!!

Remember back in the Corona days when we connected online and encouraged each other to keep the volunteer light burning? We are looking to revive these two online meetings so that NVDA members can get to know each other better and work together. Our first Members meeting is scheduled for **18th December**. So please keep the date!

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