

NETWORK FOR VOLUNTARY DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA



NEWSLETTER

June 2024



NEW YEAR, NEW STRENGTH OF IVS



We are already halfway through 2024, and a lot has happened at NVDA.

At the May GA, colleagues who normally live in different countries met and passionately exchanged ideas about IVS and NGO empowerment.

There were people who have been doing this work for a long time and newcomers who joined the GA for the first time, but they all had one thing in common: they were all people who took a step forward to make this world a little better.

The GA in Nepal made me feel once again that NVDA is a wonderful place to be with such friends.

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TRAINING AND NETWORK WORKSHOP & GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2024

By Richa Ghimire (VIN)

The Training and Network Workshop (TNW) 2024 started on May 13th with a trip to Okhaldhunga from Kathmandu (Headquarter of VIN). Participants arrived at 6 PM, relaxed, and got to know each other during an orientation hosted by Volunteers Initiative Nepal (VIN). Alex led a program presentation, and the evening ended with a welcoming party, setting a friendly tone for the week.



TNW

On May 14th, the focus was on "Our Network Direction: 2030 Goals." The day began with ice-breaking activities and an update on the Network for Voluntary Development in Asia (NVDA). Kai presented NVDA's direction and 2030 goals. After a break, we worked in groups to discuss social change goals and shared their ideas in a plenary session.

In the afternoon, Sophat led a SWOT analysis of each organization. This activity helped everyone understand their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Sophat then talked about NGO empowerment goals, and NVDA participants discussed these in groups before presenting their ideas. The day ended with a summary session by Alex and an optional workshop by Pierre.



On May 15th, the theme was "Putting Our Strengths Together." The day began with ice-breaking activities and a discussion on NVDA's vision, mission, and values, led by Baatar. Participants did a SWOT analysis of NVDA and brainstormed ways to improve. In the afternoon, they engaged in permaculture work in VIN's project Sustainable food production "Permaculture" and had an event with the local community called bhadaure, fostering collaboration and learning.



GA

The General Assembly (GA) started on May 16th. Sophat introduced the two-day program, covering decision-making, vote regulations, and the Executive Committee (EC) election. The agenda was adopted, followed by a presentation on the International Voluntary Service (IVS) movement in Asia. Kai presented NVDA's annual report for 2023-24, and there was a discussion on decolonization by Dinesh and IVS exchange guidelines.

In the afternoon, working groups focused on member proposals about social changes and NGO empowerment, facilitated by Alex. These proposals were discussed in plenary sessions. The day ended with dinner and an open space session for informal interactions.



On May 17th, the second day of the GA began with a check-in and program overview by Alex. Kai presented NVDA's biannual plans, followed by a final discussion and voting on the proposals. Baatar presented the budget plan for the biannual period. Nori introduced the 2025 GA hosting plan, and the new EC for 2023-2024 was elected. The new EC member candidates were Kai , Sophat, Baatar and Richa. The assembly ended with an evaluation and closing remarks by Alex, followed by a goodbye party.

Participants traveled back to Kathmandu on May 18th. On May 18th evening and 19th, the new and old EC met to ensure a smooth transition and plan for the future.

This year's TNW and GA helped solidify NVDA's goals and strategies and strengthened the bonds between members, creating a unified network ready for future challenges.

IVS STARTING STORIES

*In this issue, we interviewed **Metta**, a representative of **GREAT** in Indonesia. How many times did I hear the phrase “Indonesian youth” during the interview? Her passionate and tender feelings for the youth must be the driving force behind GREAT.*

When did you start to GREAT and how it started?

We founded GREAT on the 22nd of August 2015 in Semarang, Indonesia. I was only one of the founders amongst around 20 others. We were a group of youth with experience from International Voluntary Service (IVS) earlier, and we feel that we are happy with the benefits that we get from there, including self-development, professional skills, social skills, life skills, and many other things. Through the IVS experience, we began to have a vision to involve more Indonesian youth in international voluntary service. So, we created an organization that could be a platform for them to realize themselves. But the most important thing is because of the vision, the spirit of volunteerism from IVS itself, which is to create peace and friendship in the world and build communities as well. So, that's how we started, getting together, talking about it, the benefits of it, and then we wanted to create a new youth organization in Indonesia.



So before starting your organization, you already met the IVS and you felt it's very efficient and good for Indonesian youth. How did you find the IVS?

I found the IVS through university when I was still studying. I saw this announcement on the university wall, and my sister also had joined earlier than me, a few months earlier. I listened to the stories of the experiences there. At the same time, I was kind of bored with my situation—studying and working. So, I saw it as an opportunity to try something new, including to experience different cultures and meeting people from different backgrounds. So why not? I tried it, and I was hooked from the very beginning. My first workcamp was in 2004 in Central Java. It was a social activity with villagers in Rembang, on the north shoreline of Central Java. Until now, surprisingly, I have maintained very good friendships with most of them from that first workcamp in 2004. It's amazing because we met only for like 2 weeks, but we have been friends for what, 20 years now?

Wow sounds very nice. So, then you continued joining workcamps and IVS activities since then?

Yes, since the first workcamp, I joined several other workcamps. I dared myself to also become a camp leader in other workcamps. It's kind of addictive in a way—the happiness that I get from sharing and caring for people, making friendships and networks, and creating projects. Concepting new things is also something that I'm very much into. I've joined some other funded programs for different skills like project management, NGO management, video making, photography, and many others. Naturally, I involve in more roles within IVS projects, from participants to camp leader, trainer, and staff. That's how I eventually joined as a staff founder in GREAT.

IVS STARTING STORIES

How has the organization grown since you started GREAT in 2015?

At first, it was quite hard because we had so many ideas but limited resources. We tried to carry out different types of projects. In the beginning, it was only five core team members, then grew seven or eight staffs. Both national and international volunteers number in all projects were also growing from zero to become over than 200 annually. But then COVID-19 hit us, and we had to shrink to three core team members, and later only one leader with almost zero activities and volunteers due to restriction as we all knew it. On the other hand, I also had to leave to work on other projects at that time. In the middle of 2022, I returned to the organization and had long discussions with our founders and board members about the future of GREAT. That's when I took on the job and restarted the organization in the new post-COVID situation, which is completely different from before. Now, we have three staff members: me as the Executive Director, Ben as the Project Manager, and Meita handling Office Administration and Promotions.



What are the strengths or uniqueness of your organization?

I think the strength lies in the spirit of volunteerism brought by the founders. We strongly believe in the volunteerism spirit from IVS that can bring people of diversity to unite, work and live together in all kinds of field peacefully. It has been a solid motivation for us, and becomes our strength. Curiosity is something that we want to engage more because without it, we cannot start anything new. Especially with new generations, we want to keep spreading the concept of IVS. Given the large and diverse youth population in Indonesia there is also a lot of potential for growth and positive impact on Indonesian youth through IVS.

From our field experiences, not only we become expert which is a plus factor, but also we have built local networks to start new projects, and there is significant potential for more. We hold many networking meetings both internationally and locally. This networking is one of our strengths that we are nurturing too.

What are the strengths and challenges of engaging Indonesian youth?

Indonesian youth have a strong curiosity and love for travel, which aligns with trends seen worldwide. This curiosity is crucial as it drives engagement and learning. We want to harness this curiosity through new concepts and projects in IVS. Indonesian youth are also eager to learn new things, but they need the right approach to stay motivated and consistent in their learning process.

What challenges do you face now?

As I said, we need to have the right approach to nurture the consistency of the youth. The youth nowadays easily change their minds, maybe because they get bored. We keep searching for new ways to talk to them and have a dialogue with them, hoping to engage them for longer periods. The most important thing is to show them the benefits and let them feel the benefits directly. It's proven that those who learn longer stay, longer because they want to, not because they are told to. This is what we are proud of. Despite the challenges, if we handle them the right way, they become something we can be proud of.

Do you have any messages for Indonesian youth?

Yes, keep the curiosity high because that's the key to opening doors. When you see the door, you must unlock it. When you have curiosity, follow it, and find the answers. Don't be easily satisfied with the answers. Keep searching in different ways, and you will achieve whatever you want in your dreams. IVS is one of the ways to achieve this.

Anything more you want to say to the Newsletter readers?

I hope it gives readers some insights into IVS in different countries and organizations, providing different perspectives. Thanks to NVDA for creating the Newsletter with various perspectives. I hope it gives readers ideas that there are many opportunities to get involved with IVS in Asia, especially in Indonesia with GREAT.

MEMBERS NEWS

VOLTRA, HONGKONG >>> "VOLTRA GO! MARKET CARNIVAL"

VolTra successfully hosted the "VolTra GO! Market Carnival" at the AIA Vitality Park, Hong Kong Observation Wheel, on April 13th to 14th 2024, with the aim of "SEE THE WORLD WITH YOU,BUILD THE WORLD WITH EMPATHY" . The event aimed to promote cultural diversity, foster understanding and appreciation for diverse traditions, and express gratitude for the enthusiastic support from all parties !

Moreover, this event served as a prelude to the follow-up event of "VolTra GO!" - the "Micro Volunteering Cultural Festival" . Nearly 20 activities covering different topics encouraged participants to awaken curiosity, empathy, and a desire for change, allowing them to experience different cultures in Hong Kong and understand social issues in the most immersive way . Additionally, the activities responded to various sustainable development goals, including exploring traditional Hong Kong craftsmanship, cleaning the waters of Sai Kung by Kayak, reflecting on the meaning of life, and revitalizing the rural village .

Exciting statistics:

Attracted over 16,000 public visit

Nearly 60 stalls related to world cultures participated

Nearly 30 sharing and performing guests participated

More exciting activities are in preparation! Please continue to follow VolTra and don't miss any opportunities to explore communities and cultures!



MEMBERS NEWS

IVP, AUSTRALIA



FARMERS MARKET IN GOULBURN

Many factors have impacted the world of International Voluntary Service in the last 10 years. IVP-AU found ourselves with a dwindling number of volunteers holding the organisation together, only one or two Outgoing volunteers each year or more likely none, and only one workcamp each year in Australia with no energy to organise more. An informal decision to focus on national projects led to the idea of starting a Farmers Market in Goulburn, the town where IVP office is located in Rita's home.

The first six month trial is over and the Farmers Market has proved a resounding success. It brings together around 30 farmers and producers each month, up to 1200 customers, a team of 8 local volunteers, publicity for IVP, and a modest profit. It is a great community service and we are consistently thanked personally for this initiative.

Although organising and managing the market is a huge amount of work, we have decided to continue. We hope in the future to be able to employ a manager or hand over management entirely to another community group.

So often workcamps seem ephemeral, wonderful and inspiring while they are happening but soon gone and forgotten and not well understood. It often feels like a lot of work with no lasting impact, not something we can build on but rather something that has to be started all over again. The Farmers Market is tangible, enduring, appreciated and has a wide impact. Although not a workcamp, it does bring together volunteers working together for a community cause, healthier planet, social cohesion and good vibes.

It would be good to hear about other local projects organised by other NVDA members and to learn about their impacts.



IWO, KOREA

>>> AEMPOWERING RURAL YOUTH: 'EINSTEIN CLASS' PROGRAM WRAPS UP SUCCESSFULLY

We (IWO·BW) are thrilled to share with you the successful completion of the 'Einstein Class' program, a collaboration with the company as part of a CSR initiative in Uljin, Wolsung, Gijang, and Yeonggwang. The primary objective of this initiative is to support rural youth, who often face limited educational opportunities compared to urban areas. Through the program, we brought enthusiastic university students to mentor and inspire students from nearby elementary and middle schools.

From January 8th to February 2nd, a dedicated team of 50 university student mentors engaged with 448 students, providing invaluable support in academics, career guidance, and emotional well-being. Additionally, we conducted Global citizen culture education based on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and held parents' classes to help nurture children in a better way. The enthusiastic response from students and residents truly underscores the impact of this initiative.



To celebrate our achievements, on February 16th, we proudly hosted the graduation ceremony for the 15th cohort of the 'Einstein Class' program in Seoul. It was a proud moment to witness the growth of both mentors and mentees. We're immensely grateful to the residents for their unwavering support. Their appreciation for the mentors' active role in nurturing students' dreams echoes our sentiments.

We also hope this experience serves as a platform for the mentors' personal growth through their generous contribution of talent. Looking forward, we're committed to continuing our efforts to enhance educational opportunities for students near nuclear power plants. Stay tuned for more updates, and please continue supporting us on our journey to bridge educational gaps and create a brighter future for all!

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

IVS IMPACT STORIES

GV4GF SRI LANKA & RUCHI INDIA

-These are examples of impact on Members' Projects in 2023 from NVDA annual report-

>>> GV4GF, SRI LANKA

We went to an isolated village to meet members of the youth club. After a few minutes, whole villagers are gathered around the kindergarten. Because they thought that foreigners came to distribute food. We explain our objectives and programs to them. After that only a few people left and all the others stayed with us. It became a community activity, not only for youths. They learned the Japanese education system, foods, disciplines, how to find jobs, and origami. They are a marginalized community. politicians visit there only to collect their votes and give promises.



Tamaki
I didn't expect such a wonderful and amazing experience in Sri Lanka. At first I didn't even know where Sri Lanka was, but now I love the country! After graduating from uni, I would like to work for a Japanese company on the world stage, and Sri Lanka is one of those stages. I have gained a lot from the people involved in this program. One of my goals for the future is to do something that will contribute to Sri Lanka. Thank you a lot!!

>>> RUCHI, INDIA



Tibetan Culture and Waste Upcycling from 11/09 to 23/09: Pille-Riin, a middle age woman, was one of the 14 volunteers who joined this project. She was from Estonia and this was her first volunteering opportunity. She was confused in the beginning about the type of work and physical work involved in it. However, her perspective changed after 4-5 days and she was not only fully involved but stated enjoying everything. She learned a lot about upcycling, enjoyed interacting with women and contributed on farm activities. She intends to come back but meanwhile she continues to donate small funds to RUCHI.

ASPIRATIONS OF NEW EC



The new NVDA EC were elected for 2024-26. Here are the aspirations from the new EC.

Sophat (President) : As the new executive committee members of the Network for Voluntary Development in Asia (NVDA), we are committed to advancing our organization through collaboration, impact, and recognition. By fostering deeper connections among member organizations, we aim to tackle regional challenges effectively through joint projects and resource sharing.

Our focus in the upcoming term will address critical issues like poverty, environmental degradation, and education, ensuring our efforts lead to sustainable development and tangible outcomes. By leveraging our collective expertise and networks, we plan to initiate innovative projects and public awareness campaigns that align with NVDA's mission and goals. Together, as a unified NVDA family, we can drive transformative positive, lasting change.



Richa (Vice President EX) : As an Executive Committee (EC) member, I aim to work closely with partners to create and carry out initiatives for NVDA that align with our goals. My plans for 2024-2026 include building strong partnerships, organizing training workshops, and leading advocacy efforts regionally and internationally. I will focus on making our decision-making transparent, accountable, and inclusive to ensure our actions are effective and lasting.

I am passionate about networking and international relations, and my experience as Secretary to the President of Volunteers Initiative Nepal has given me valuable skills in working with external stakeholders and representing our organization. As Vice President for External, I plan to use these skills to strengthen the Asia-Pacific region within the IVS Movement, expand our network of partners, and advance our collective goals. I am excited to contribute to the growth and success of NVDA over the next two years.



Alex (Vice President IN) : NVDA is a creation of its members to strengthen our local volunteer actions at the regional level of Asia Pacific. Being in the Executive Committee (as the vice-president for internal affairs) boosts my curiosity in what our partners are doing and raises my involvement in the network with the aims to expose the value that each of us bring to the world, to enhance participation, exchange and support in these multiple golden actions. We grow by opening up and linking our roots and energies to others we respect and admire. Hopefully, we'll create more and more opportunities to mutualize our strength and we'll become more recognized and supported at the Asian level. Have you ever thought how rich we can get through volunteering?



Kai (General Secretary) : Crisis of our plant earth is getting more serious with destroying beautiful nature, cultures, life and communities. Our IVS is so tiny to solve them, but has very unique values and impact that could be empowered much more toward a colorful and healthy world. I and NICE are very happy to take this important role and wish to work powerfully with all of a new President, EC colleagues, Secretariat, member NGOs and people!

Personally (as well as NICE), I have been very strongly involved in this network since the beginning and so would like to utilize its strong points (e.g., inviting ex activists, having longer term visions that can be made by longer term commitment) while minimize its risks (e.g., disturbing new generations/comers/ methodologies/ visions with sticking to unnecessarily keep the same ways).

Beside the general roles, I would like to concretely focus on;

1. Support to increase the number of projects and volunteers by Member NGOs
2. Capacity Building of Member NGOs (Sister Staff Communities, Asian Voluntary Service, etc.)
3. Climate actions (developing SCC projects and create "Care for the planet")
4. Establish and run the system to measure/ collect/ present/ maximize the impact on SDGs.
5. Start IVS in "new" clountries of Pacific oceans, West Asia, etc.

Each NGO has to prioritize their own daily work first even though network actions could bring great bebefits to the world and their NGOs in a long term. But we can try to find an effective way to merge the daily work/ benefits and network actions, as well as involvingvmore individuals of member NGOs. There are many things that can be done not by a single NGO, but only by the network together!

Baatar (Treasurer) : When I'm being part of EC of NVDA, I feel good about myself because I hope I'm helping development of network in some way. A little bit of my time can mean to bring some positive changes to the NVDA and it's members. I hope if I continue to do so, I can make a greater difference in the NVDA community.



MEMBERS UPCOMING PROJECTS

>>> DEJAVATO FOUNDATION, INDONESIA

International Workcamp

**BALI SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN
2024/2025**



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Information

Location: Dissability School 1 Badung

Dates:

- 12-20 August 2024
- 22-30 January 2025

Work Tasks:

- Assisting local teacher in teaching English
- Supporting and taking care disability students
- Do sports and games with local teenagers
- Intercultural learning about another culture from other country



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Information

International participants need to pay 350 €

Cost Include:

- Accommodation, meals, and working material
- Activities
- infosheet, travel guidance
- An emergency number 24/7
- A certificate



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International Workcamp

WEST BALI 2024/2025



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UPCOMING EVENTS

»»» SPECIAL WEEK FOR SISTER STAFF COMMUNITIES

We are starting Special online meeting for NVDA's member orgs' staff members in the same position can share common know-how, concerns, and ideas. The second meeting will be held July 1-5 . More details will be sent to members shortly via email.

Date / Theme / Facilitator

July 01 : Outgoing placement Kai

July 02 : Incoming placement Baatar

July 03 : Project coordinator / Trainer Alex

July 04 : PR (get more Outgoing and National Vols.) Richa

July 05 : Head (President and Directors) Sophat

»»» ASIAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE 2024

Asian Voluntary Service (AVS) is a special program of NVDA to exchange the LMTVs (Long and Mid Term Volunteers) focusing on various themes (environment, rural development, culture, education and human rights) in the Workcamp (group) format.

It started in 2014 and 94 volunteers from 14 countries have been hosted in 40 projects of 11 countries till now.

We restarted it in 2023 after the frozen period due to the COVID-19 in the new format of exchanging office interns & project leaders with 10 vols. participated in 7 NGOs in 6 countries!

AVS will be held 2024 and, as last year, we will receive a grant from the Mitsubishi Foundation in Japan! (Thanks to the efforts of NICE). 9 NGOs (IVP, SVI, FSL, RUCHI, MCE, NICE, GIVE, VIN, Dalaa) will participate and the participants will spend the month of October in Workcamps and Internships. There will also be an online orientation and an open event. Please keep an eye out for what kind of drama this year's AVS will bring!

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