

NETWORK FOR VOLUNTARY DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA



NEWSLETTER

June 2025



POWERFUL REMINDER OF THE ROOTS OF IVS



In May, the General Assembly was held in Macau, bringing together members and guest from 17 organizations/ networks for passionate discussions.

Meeting face-to-face with colleagues we usually work with through online—engaging in lively debates and even sweating together through volunteer activities—was a powerful reminder of the roots of IVS.

Whether you participated in the GA or not, let's take this moment to reconnect with our motivation and gear up for the upcoming high season!



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ACTIVITY REPORTS

NVDA TNW & GA2025 IN MACAU “A WEEK OF CONNECTION AND VISION”

From May 12 to 17, 2025, NVDA successfully held its 19th Training Networking Workcamp (TNW) and 20th General Assembly (GA) in Macau, warmly hosted by MNCYA.

The event brought together 21 participants, from 17 NGOs (13 full members, 2 associate members, 2 networks) and many volunteers from host organization, MNCYA.

During the TNW, participants engaged in interactive workshops and group discussions on key topics such as volunteering in conflict areas, climate action, gender equality, and the protection of cultural heritage. Through cross-cultural exchange and collaborative dialogue, new possibilities for international cooperation emerged.

At the GA, members approved the annual and financial reports and celebrated two exciting decisions: the admission of IPYL (Palestine) as an associate member, and the approval of HJA (Laos) as a full member. The assembly also endorsed new initiatives, including an internship program and leadership development efforts, as part of NVDA's shared goals toward 2030.



Cultural and local engagement activities enriched the program, including calligraphy, tea ceremony, martial arts, a beach cleanup, and an introduction to IVS at a local school—all of which deepened connections with the local community.

The week concluded with warm reflections and a festive farewell party, leaving everyone energized and inspired.

NVDA extends heartfelt thanks to MNCYA for their thoughtful and generous hosting.

With the energy and connections built in Macau, we move forward—committed to cooperation, sustainability, and solidarity across Asia, Europe and beyond.



ACTIVITY REPORTS

REPORT ON M.I.L.E. PARTICIPATION

By Richa Ghimire (Vice President of NVDA, VIN)

Introduction

The M.I.L.E. (Measuring Impact of Long and Medium Term Engagement) project is a unique and forward-thinking initiative that seeks to analyze and document the true impact of medium- and long-term international voluntary service (LMTV) programs. Supported by CCIVS (Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service), this global initiative focuses on a holistic evaluation of the effects these projects have on volunteers, organizations, and communities. I had the honor of representing the Network for Voluntary Development in Asia (NVDA) and Volunteer Initiative Nepal (ViN) at the M.I.L.E. training held from 8–12 April 2025 in Walberberg, Germany. This report shares an in-depth look into the training experience, the project's goals, and how it shapes our future work in voluntary service.



Understanding M.I.L.E.

M.I.L.E. addresses a longstanding gap in IVS impact measurement: most previous assessments have focused on short-term volunteer engagements. M.I.L.E. shifts attention to longer-term initiatives, which often have deeper and more lasting effects but are under-documented. The project seeks to understand not only personal growth experienced by volunteers but also systemic and organizational changes. It pays particular attention to the dynamics between Global North and Global South actors and emphasizes the need to decolonize international volunteering—recognizing that volunteers and communities in the Global South are not passive beneficiaries, but equal contributors and change agents.

The primary goals of M.I.L.E. include:

- Gaining insight into how LMTV projects influence individuals, communities, and organizations.
- Strengthening the capacity of all involved to act with awareness and responsibility.
- Promoting the recognition of volunteering as a transformative and reciprocal process.



ACTIVITY REPORTS

Training Highlights and Key Learnings

The five-day training in Walberberg was hosted by SCI Germany and brought together youth leaders, researchers, and practitioners from all over the world. Participants represented diverse IVS organizations working across various social and environmental contexts. The training was experiential and participatory, structured to build knowledge day-by-day, with space for both theoretical understanding and practical application.

Day 1 began with introductions, team building, and an orientation to the M.I.L.E. project. We participated in collaborative exercises like the spaghetti and marshmallow tower challenge to highlight the importance of planning and teamwork. Discussions helped clarify the phases of the M.I.L.E. project: from training and research to dissemination.

Day 2 focused on self-reflection. Through activities such as identity molecules and timeline mapping, we looked back at our personal volunteering journeys and the changes they catalyzed. This introspection laid the foundation for understanding how change occurs and how it can be measured.

Day 3 introduced the decolonisation aspect of the project. We explored how historical and structural inequalities still shape global volunteering. Engaging debates like the Fishbowl discussion tackled topics such as white saviour complex, power dynamics in partnerships, and strategies for shifting these patterns. It was a powerful space for confronting assumptions and sharing perspectives openly.

Day 4 emphasized practical skills in conducting qualitative interviews. We practiced real-time interviews and created innovative group presentations in styles such as horror, TV interviews, and telenovelas. This exercise underscored the importance of listening deeply and presenting complex stories in accessible, engaging ways.

Day 5 consolidated the week's learning with final evaluations and preparation for the upcoming research phase. Trainers guided us through planning next steps, ensuring we felt equipped to carry out our interviews and analyze the results thoughtfully.



Development and Use of Research Tools

During the training, we co-created semi-structured interview templates aimed at three key stakeholder groups: long and medium-term volunteers (LMTVs), members of host organizations, and members of local communities. The questions were rooted in a Theory of Change framework, helping link daily project activities to short-, medium-, and long-term impacts.

We also discussed ethical interviewing practices, including data protection and informed consent. Transcriptions will include not only spoken words but also emotional and non-verbal cues to better reflect participants' lived experiences.

This qualitative approach, enhanced by decolonisation tools developed by CCIVS since 2021, ensures the inclusion of diverse voices—especially from underrepresented regions.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

My Role and Project Contributions

As a participant from Nepal and NVDA, I brought in perspectives from the Global South, particularly our work through Volunteer Initiative Nepal (ViN). I actively engaged in working groups, designing interview frameworks and providing examples from our ongoing permaculture project. This project, focused on sustainable food production, seeks to develop a holistic ecosystem where every element contributes to overall balance.

I also contributed to refining research tools with a decolonisation lens—advocating for equal representation, contextual adaptability, and local ownership of projects. Additionally, I shared challenges faced by volunteers from the South, including visa restrictions, funding disparities, and systemic biases.

Upcoming Research Phase and Implementation

As a follow-up to the training, I will be conducting at least three interviews in Nepal: one with a long- or medium-term volunteer, one with a local community member, and one with an organizational representative. These interviews will capture both the tangible and intangible impacts of volunteer service, and will be conducted in either English or the interviewee's mother tongue, with translations provided where necessary.

All interview recordings and transcriptions will be submitted by July 31, 2025. ViN and NVDA will provide logistical and ethical support, ensuring the research upholds high standards of inclusion, accuracy, and respect.

Final Reflections

Participating in the M.I.L.E. training was not only a professional development opportunity it was a personal journey of growth, connection, and renewed commitment. It reminded me of the power of reflective practice, of the importance of equity in global partnerships, and of the value of listening deeply.

M.I.L.E. challenges us to go beyond traditional project outputs and to ask difficult questions about who benefits, how change occurs, and what roles we each play in that process. I am excited to apply these insights within NVDA and ViN and to share the results of our research with the broader CCIVS and IVS communities.

M.I.L.E. is about transformation not just for the communities we serve, but for ourselves as changemakers in a global network grounded in solidarity, justice, and shared learning.



MEMBERS NEWS

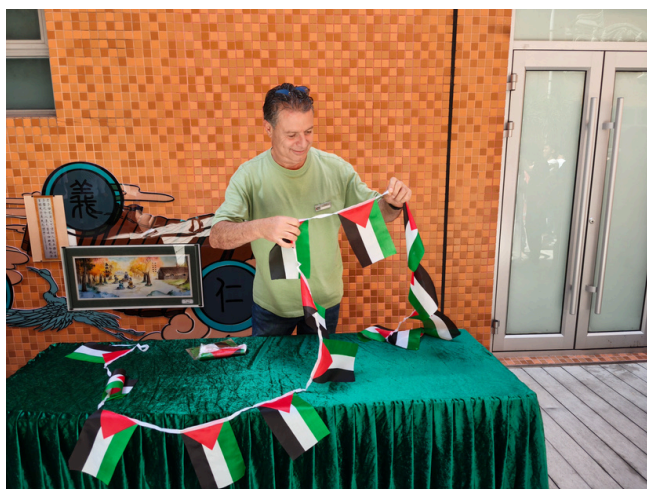
IPYL, PALESTINE

>>> WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBER: IPYL FROM PALESTINE!

We are delighted to welcome a new member to the NVDA family: the International Palestinian Youth League (IPYL), based in Palestine.

Founded in 1997, IPYL has long been committed to empowering Palestinian youth through education, intercultural exchange, and active community engagement. The organization offers a wide range of programs—from international volunteer projects and youth trainings to local capacity-building and human rights initiatives—all aimed at promoting peace, inclusion, and sustainable development.

At the heart of IPYL's vision is the belief that young people are agents of change—and their work proves it every day, often in complex and challenging environments. By providing platforms for international solidarity and shared learning, IPYL has enabled thousands of young people in Palestine and beyond to grow, connect, and contribute to a more just world.



We were especially pleased that Mr. Adli Daana, the founder of IPYL, joined our recent NVDA General Assembly. With over 30 years of experience in the field of international voluntary service (IVS), he has inspired many through his dedication to grassroots empowerment and global cooperation.

IPYL's membership marks an important step in NVDA's commitment to strengthening partnerships and solidarity across all regions, including the Middle East. We look forward to learning from IPYL's extensive experience and working together in our growing network.

Let us all give a warm welcome to IPYL and look forward to building stronger connections together!

🔗 Learn more about them at: <https://ipyl.org>

IVS SPECIAL INTERVIEW



“MOVING FORWARD THROUGH CHALLENGES”

By OBORA Rio : AVS Volunteer, NICE

In Feb.-Mar. 2025, volunteers participating in the Asian Voluntary Service (AVS) conducted interviews with the founders and staff of their Sending Organizations to deepen their understanding of the organizations. We will present this special interview series in consecutive installments. This time, Rio, AVS Volunteer from NICE Japan, interviewed Ragland, Deputy Director of FSL India

Could you tell me the story how FSL started?

It started from a movement of young people who were interested in volunteering in 2000. After that they started involving many volunteers from overseas. In 2004 tsunami happened in India and the work had increased. From that time, we slowly started to have partnerships with organizations from different countries and started receiving more volunteers from overseas.



What was the difficulties that you have faced?

If you ask me, the difficult time is now, post covid. During covid, it was also a challenging time. We worked on healthcare awareness and food distribution and so on but we couldn't have volunteers from overseas and the work was less so we have to reduce the number of staffs. Now, the number of volunteers is slowly increased but it still less than the numbers before the covid.

Do you have any strategies to overcome this post covid challenge?

Yes. One of the way we working on is group workcamps. The number is increased. Second is promoting national volunteers. And, third one is reaching out to CSR for employee volunteers.



From Roots to Action:

A New Workcamp in Hokkaido, Japan 🇯🇵

Inspired by her experience with FSL India, Rio proposed starting an international workcamp in Ginzan, a small rural town in Hokkaido where her grandfather is a local community leader. Facing depopulation and aging, the town welcomed the idea, and with partnership from NICE and HIF, the camp will launch in summer 2025 as part of the community's 50th anniversary. Rio will serve as camp leader, bringing her international learning back to her own roots.

IVS IMPACT STORIES

-These are examples of impact on Members' Projects in 2024 from NVDA annual report-

DW CHINA

Fujian Tulou - World Heritage Preservation and Revitalization; July 27 to August 4; The kids in the village love the volunteers and prefer joining the workcamp event than playing games at home!

Many of the villagers can see the fun the kids were having during the workcamp and thanked the volunteers with lots of free food. Kids in the villagers actually go to school outside the village so even though they are kids from the same village, they don't really know each other well or play with each other.



Due to the workcamp, the village kids get to know each other more and started making friends and playing with each other more. The kids also learn more about world heritage from Vietnam and more about the importance of Tulou preservation.



Environment & Photography- Spring in Reykjavik; April 5 to 14; During the workcamp, the volunteer visited the local Freedee, and learned about this type of sharing mechanism/space for food.

The volunteer was able to learn many different ideas and ways to be involved in the community and hope to bring them back to his home for his work.

MEMBERS UPCOMING PROJECTS

IVP, AUSTRALIA

>>> BRINGING APPLES AND ACTION TOGETHER 🍏

IVP AUSTRALIA'S NEW WORKCAMP AT TALLONG APPLE FESTIVAL

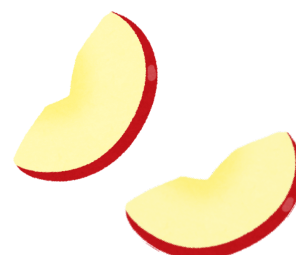
IVP Australia is proud to introduce a brand-new workcamp at the Tallong Apple Festival, a joyful celebration of community, culture, and – of course – apples! This exciting partnership marks a new chapter for us, and we hope it will grow into a long-term collaboration that brings volunteers back year after year.

Tallong is a small village in regional New South Wales with a rich orchard history. Once blanketed with apple trees, the landscape has changed over the years – but the spirit of the community remains strong. With just one shop, one school, and a big heart, Tallong offers a genuine and meaningful volunteering experience in Australia.

This September, our team of local and international volunteers will dive into festival preparations: assisting with stalls, setting up exhibitions, and supporting the running of community events. Along the way, they'll connect with local residents, learn about the village's heritage, and get a real taste of country life – quite literally, with local produce!



More than just a festival, this workcamp is a celebration of resilience and community. It's also a chance for cultural exchange, friendship-building, and rural revitalisation. We're excited to see how this project blossoms – and we're already looking forward to next year.



UPCOMING EVENTS

>>> 🌱 NEW NVDA INTERSHIP PROJECT TO LAUNCH IN JULY!

NVDA is excited to launch a new internship project starting in July 2025! This initiative aims to deepen collaboration between international NGOs and young people across Asia, while also fostering friendships and solidarity among those working together across borders.

Currently, 4 member NGOs—NICE, HJA, VPV, and Dalaa—have confirmed their participation, and the recruitment and interviews for interns are underway. Interns will gain hands-on experience by working with their host organizations on local activities, while also supporting NVDA's regional efforts through online collaboration.

We're also pleased to announce that Ms. Linh from Vietnam, who interned with NVDA last year, will serve as the Publicity Leader for this project. With her passion and experience, we look forward to her leading dynamic communications and building strong connections. Stay tuned for updates and stories from our interns and partner organizations in the months ahead!

>>> SPECIAL WEEK FOR SISTER STAFF COMMUNITIES

The Sister Staff Community marked its first anniversary in April. As we review how it's run, we've decided to try holding it over three days during the second week, starting in July. We'd also love to hear more of your thoughts and suggestions on how we can improve its operation!

Date / Theme / Facilitator

July 14 (M) / Placement officers + PR / Kai, Baatar, Richa

July 15 (Tu) / Project Coordinators/ Trainers / Alex

July 16 (W) / Heads of NGOs / Sophat

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