- A common concept/ position/ strategic paper of IVS (International Voluntary Service) NGOs –

What is our IVS?

Finalized in 2019 Jan.

Started in France in 1920

5,111 projects were organized in 90 countries where 30,266 volunteers and millions of local people participated (in 2016) working for Environment, Human Rights, Culture, Education, Development toward Peace, Justice and Sustainability.
Made by a Global Task Force, representing the following 6 networks
ALLIANCE (Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organizations)
CCIVS (Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service)
EAVS (Eastern Africa Voluntary Service Development Network)
ICYE (International Cultural Youth Exchange)
NVDA (Network for Voluntary Development in Asia)
SCI (Service Civil International)

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See Annex A. Whole process of Task Force for more details of the Task Force.
1. Introduction, aim and background

There is an increasing number of stakeholders and organisations working around international volunteering such as governmental or intergovernmental bodies, companies and individual NGOs outside our networks. In addition, other forms of similar programmes are emerging and becoming prominent such as home and farm stays, trainings and internships, international study exchanges, etc. Travelling has never been so easy. This changing environment affects the IVS movement in a number of positive and negative ways.

IVS networks need to define and strengthen our common values and find common strategies for further development and improvement.

The main objectives of the paper are: to reconfirm our common values, to strengthen cooperation and solidarity, to overcome our weaknesses and develop our strengths. In addition to:

1. Clarifying externally what are our differences and similarities (especially in our presentation to the potential/ existing volunteers and partners that would help each NGO to recruit more quality, motivated and suitable vols. & partners.)
2. Developing our strategy to review, potentially learn from, and collaborate with other types of international volunteering
3. Continuing to focus on improving the quality of our projects and be confident in the work we do.
4. Taking a leading role in promoting our work and the values of IVS

2. International Voluntary Service: a definition

Before going to define what is International Voluntary Service, let’s first define what is voluntary service. There are many ways to define and the below chart is one way that voluntary service is a human activity to fulfil three conditions; 1. Not by order (but from the natural will and individual choice), 2. Not for profit (without expecting materialistic benefits) and 3. For/ with society (for its betterment).

a. The Definition

What is International Voluntary Service (IVS)?

International Voluntary Service (IVS) has since 1920 sought to respond to the prevalent issues of society on a local and global level, it aims to pursue peace and promotes non violence through international understanding, mutual respect, friendship, exchange and cooperation among the people of the world. IVS is a vehicle for non-formal and informal education and acts as a catalyst for change within individuals and in communities giving people the chance to participate in meaningful, productive and socially useful work as active members of society. It promotes the participation of all regardless of gender, skin colour, religion, nationality, age, ability, sexual orientation, social status or political views and any other possible grounds for discrimination, in a spirit of true equality and the recognition of the right of others to dignity and respect. IVS promotes social and climate justice, human rights, sustainability, critical thinking, active
participation, global citizenship, democracy, shared and intercultural learning and helps to break down prejudice and stereotypes. It contributes to the Implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

**How does the IVS Movement work?**
The IVS movement works based on a spirit of reciprocal international cooperation between non-governmental, not for profit, grassroots organisations sharing a common vision and working in local host communities in over 90 countries.

IVS organisations are gathered in networks, where decisions and ethical working standards are built democratically and decided in assemblies with respect to cultural and organisational diversity. It is an exchange organised locally, coordinated nationally and realised globally. Volunteers apply through a sending organisation and are received by a host organisation.

The IVS movement strives for a world where relations are characterised by equity, social justice, active involvement and a sense of community empowerment. It provides people with the means to understand and act in order to positively transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures that affect their lives at all levels. IVS supports resilience, acts for solidarity not charity and seeks to create a world of mutual respect and understanding.

**The Volunteers**
Volunteers are people acting on self-initiative for the benefit of civil society, who offer their knowledge, time and energy, within the framework of a cooperative social effort, without seeking material reward or replacing paid labour. Voluntary service is based on the idea, that working together on a concrete task is one of the most effective ways to create friendship and understanding. The projects serve as a basis for dialogue, an opportunity to work according to each person’s ability and to practice learning by doing and living together for periods of 2 days up to 1 year. In such situations national and international volunteers experience a new reality which can challenge their habits and convictions. Our impact research proves that IVS provides enhanced self-confidence and strengthened personal, interpersonal and social competences, volunteers learn that through active participation in IVS projects they are able to create change.

‘If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time.
But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine,
then let us work together.’

(Aboriginal activists group, Queensland, 1970s)

**b. Universal Charter of IVS**
This briefly presents basic and fundamental values and principles of International Voluntary Service.
The original version was made in the General Assembly of CCIVS in 1998 and the Global Task Force of “What is our IVS?” modified it in its meeting in 2017, it has been approved by ALLIANCE (Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organizations), CCIVS (Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service), NVDA (Network for Voluntary Development in Asia) and SCI (Service Civil International) in their General Assemblies in 2017-2018.
Universal Charter of International Voluntary Service

We, the representatives of the following,
ALLIANCE (Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organizations)
CCIVS (Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service)
EAVS (Eastern Africa Voluntary Service Development Network)
ICYE (International Cultural Youth Exchange)
NVDA (Network for Voluntary Development in Asia)
SCI (Service Civil International)
present our fundamental principles and ideals through this Universal Charter of International Voluntary Service (IVS).

PREAMBLE
The people of the world today are faced by basic challenges: warfare and conflict, the struggle for social, cultural and economic justice and the preservation of the global ecosystem. The international volunteer service (IVS) movement is committed to overcome these challenges.

Our work is based on the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Sustainable Development Goals. IVS by people with different skills and high ideals is a practical demonstration of the commitment, solidarity and cooperation which our world so urgently needs. It is our aim to promote these ideals both locally and globally.

PRINCIPLES
Volunteers are people who offer to devote their knowledge, time and energy, within the framework of a collective social effort, to work actively for the general interest of the community, as an activist and without replacing paid labour.

IVS brings mutual benefit to volunteers and to the wider community. Volunteers have the opportunity to learn from experiences and to develop through new friendships and intercultural learning. Volunteers must not be exploited for private interests. Volunteers cannot expect any compensation other than the personal growth in knowledge, skills, and sense of value for both themselves and the local community.

IVS is a vehicle for non-formal and informal education and seeks to encourage the belief of the volunteers and their hosts in their personal potential as tools of positive change.

IVS demonstrates a concern for the problems of local communities, raises awareness among the stakeholders involved, and shows how problems may be overcome through co-operative effort.

Volunteers should co-operate with the local community as fully as possible in useful work and exchange knowledge, skills and experience with the members of the local community. Thus, international voluntary service supports local objectives and actions, provides practical training and education, develops social responsibility, self-awareness and self-reliance, as the basis for sustainable socio-economic progress.

IVS encourages a spirit of reciprocal international co-operation, and emphasises the need to reconstruct global society to achieve material and social equality between countries and between people.
IVS encourages global citizenship and promotes peace, justice and sustainability.

COMMITMENT

Volunteers, IVS organisations, hosting communities and all other stakeholders should work within the spirit of this Charter.

We, who co-sign it, commit ourselves to subscribe to the principles above and we appeal to states, national and international bodies as well as local governments, to provide the voluntary organisations with necessary means to develop international voluntary service.

This Charter can be amended over time. However, IVS at the local and global level is a tide of practical idealism, which will only be effective if it retains its basic principles.

Revised in the Meeting of Global Task Force “What is Our IVS?”, 29 Sep.-03 Oct. 2017, Kawasaki - Japan

c. The main features of IVS

Core elements of IVS
As already mentioned in the Charter:
1. Volunteers devote their knowledge, time and energy, to work actively for the community,
2. Activity done as an activist and without being paid nor replacing paid labour,
3. Mutual interest. Volunteers develop new friendships and intercultural learning,
4. Project based on needs from local community as the basis for sustainable socio-economic progress,
5. Vehicle for non-formal/ informal education and encourages reciprocal international co-operation,
6. Encourages global citizenship and promotes peace, justice and sustainability,
7. Working on a global partnership in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals.

White Paper on International Voluntary Service (made by CCIVS)
The White Paper is a policy tool for networks and organisations engaged in the field of IVS and for policy institutions, civil society bodies and international institutions who share the values of IVS aiming to provide guidelines to support the goals of IVS on both the internal and external levels. It is a policy paper highlighting strategies and recommendations on IVS 2011-2021. It describes what IVS organisations and networks do, the way they work and the vision and strategies set to achieve their highest goals. See the paper here.

Workcamps
Most of IVS projects are done in the form of workcamps. Workcamps are one form of voluntary service programs where the volunteers live and work together.
Categories by length and sizes of groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of vols.</th>
<th>Workcamp = group type (more than 2 vols.)</th>
<th>Individual type (1 or 2 vols.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Short Term (6 days or less)</td>
<td>VSTW</td>
<td>(all together) VSTV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Term (1 week-1 month)</td>
<td>STW</td>
<td>(all together) STV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Term (1-6 months)</td>
<td>MTW</td>
<td>(together) TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term (over 6 months)</td>
<td>LTW</td>
<td>LMT (together) TV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* VSTW are also called “Weekend Workcamps” or “Mini Workcamps”.
* LTV and MTV are usually called (either “LMTV” or “MLTV”).
* Most of IVS NGOs rarely organize/exchange VSTI and STI while many of LMTV are individual type (LMTI).

Categories by Geographical scale (where the volunteers come from)

- International (open globally)
- Regional (e.g. only for Asian)
- Trilateral (3 countries)
- Bilateral (2 countries)
- National
- Local

* In the wider definition, Regional/Trilateral/Bilateral workcamps can be also called “International”.

Other categories

We can categorize the projects by themes such as peace and human rights, environment and sustainability, active participation and social inclusion, poverty eradication and health promotion, cultural heritage and diversity.

There are also “Group workcamps”, organized for specific groups such as schools and community clubs.

d. Statistics and Impact of IVS

Global statistics of IVS

By the agreement and the collaboration of the 5 networks in the Global Meeting of IVS organisations (GMIVS), the global statistics of their member and partner NGOs have been made since 2013. In 2016, +5,111 projects were organized in 90 countries by 204 NGOs. STV occupies 65%, MTV 16%, LTV 19%.
+ 49% of all projects were in Europe, 31% in Asia, 12% in Africa and 9% in Americas.
+ 25% of all projects were Environmental, 23% Educational, 20% each Cultural and Developmental.
+ 30,266 volunteers joined in which STV occupies 86%, MTV 9% and LTV 6%.
+ 65% of all volunteers were from Europe, 27% from Asia, 6% from Africa and 3% from Americas.
+ 58% of all volunteers were female, 79% was age 18-30 and 72% was student.

For more details, see the Annex B. Global Statistics of IVS 2016.
Impact of IVS

There are various typologies and levels of impact generated by IVS projects, from personal to local, national, regional and global. The common approach to impact is based on the idea of change, as developed for instance by several CCIVS members and partners during the first “Changing Perspectives” project, coordinated by Solidarités Jeunesses, France: “A change or an effect on individuals, collectives or environments in the short, medium and long term. Produced by interaction between individuals, communities and environments in the context of International Voluntary Service actions. Perceivable, and as such could lead to social recognition or personal acknowledgment.”

IVS creates a lot of valuable, unique positive change, though it is also important to recognize the potential for negative impact of some of the actions despite the good will of volunteers, communities and NGOs. IVS is taking steps to maximise the positive impact toward its goals and minimise the negative impact.

Specific areas of impact and change at the participants’ level concern the personal, interpersonal and social dimensions; their competences and skills; their knowledge and their attitudes; and their life perspectives and opportunities. Among other aspects, communities and organisations can see crucial improvements in terms of intercultural learning and respect for diversity, social integration, active participation, peace and conflict management. The work is also reflected in the impact brought by concrete projects and results in the fields of environment and sustainability, heritage, local economies and livelihoods, and health among others.

Impact research

While a full assessment of the different levels of impact brought by IVS in the short and long term can be very challenging, it is increasingly demonstrated that projects do produce important changes for the individuals, communities and organisations involved. We are now building a path towards the recognition of such transformational value, using three objectives supported by strategic research: better understanding our practices and the experiences of the participants; improving the capacity of the organisations, communities and individual volunteers to become conscious actors of change; and valorising the unique processes and results that stakeholders create together thanks to the invaluable interactions of IVS, giving them wider visibility across the institutional and public spheres.

CCIVS has since 2013 conducted quantitative and qualitative research on the impact of international workcamps. Implemented with a community-based, capacity building and participative approach, the research framework built on pioneering projects led by member organisations Solidarites Jeunesses (France) and Better World (Korea), and has been supported academically by the University of Illinois (USA); impact studies are now implemented regularly within the network and expanded in scope and outreach thanks to the direct involvement of many IVS organisations and communities in the planning, field research and analysis of the data collected from projects all over the world.

To learn more about the impact measurement and results please read here: http://ccivs.org/ccivs-in-action/impact/
The website will be updated with new results as they become available.

ICYE has also developed Impact Assessment for Long Term projects and has developed the following handbook.

NVDA has conducted the research project “AEVTP” focusing on the impact of 5 themes such as Environment, Culture, Education, etc. to the communities co-organised with Asia Europe Foundation and NICE.
e. Quality standard of IVS

There have been many efforts and cooperation to maintain and raise the quality by all the stakeholders and the networks have made the following guidelines.

- IVS Handbook (CCIVS)
- State of the Art of IVS (CCIVS) - Coming soooon!
- On IVS impact and methodologies (CCIVS)
- Alliance Quality Charter/ Golden Rules/ ALLIANCE Guidebook (ALLIANCE)
- Practical Procedure/ Common Guidelines of BEES (SCI)
- Why & How to organize international workcamps (NVDA)
- Minimal Conditions/ Non Formal Education Handbook (ICYE)
- Guideline for Inter-regional Volunteers Exchange (GMIVS - Global Meeting of IVS Networks)
- LMTV Handbook/ Minimum standard of LMTV exchange (GLMTV - Global LMTV Meeting)

Step to Change and Step to the Future

The mission of the CCIVS is, among other functions, to empower its members and IVS organisations so that they will have better capacity to reach their goals and achieve their vision as organisations and as a movement. After several years of working on a common proposal, the General Assembly of the CCIVS 2014 in Korea approved a plan for the CCIVS to implement a monitoring system which should allow assessing the needs of IVS organisations, supporting them, organising trainings and developing synergies between members that may turn weaknesses into strengths and opportunities. The STEP to Change project aimed at being the start for the implementation of a Monitoring and Empowerment System within the CCIVS.

The project STEP to the Future continues in 2018-19 to reach more IVS organisations, to ensure competences for multiplication in all regions, to consolidate the continuity of these trainings with decentralised projects and aligned networks, to establish a common organisational development “language” that allows to train, follow-up, monitor members worldwide and which we are sure that is intercultural enough, horizontal enough, and adaptable to the whole movement’s needs. The long term objective is to develop with a more international pool of experts and a long term training course which corresponds to the needs of the movement.

The ‘State of the Art of IVS’ was created in the first STEPS project and is currently being edited it will appear soon on the CCIVS resource section of the webpage [http://ccivs.org/resources_page/](http://ccivs.org/resources_page/)
3. IVS and other similar concepts

a. Other exchange and educational programs
There are many programs and actions in society as listed below that can be totally different to IVS, may have some similarities, or some common elements, and they are choices of participation for some people, “Should I join XXX or IVS?”.

1. Volunteering locally or nationally, 2. Other international exchange programmes, 3. Language study/Study abroad, 4. Other non-formal education, 5. Travelling abroad and 6. Training/ internship

There are discussion on the benefits of IVS in terms of the aims of the above mentioned programs.

b. Various stakeholders organize international volunteering
As mentioned in the Introduction, there is an increasing number of stakeholders and organisations working around international volunteering;
1. Governmental or intergovernmental institutions
2. Travel agencies and other companies
3. NGOs outside IVS networks
4. Religious groups
5. Formal education institutions

There are discussions among IVS NGOs on the difference and similarity between IVS and projects organized by those stakeholders.

c. Questions to judge the nature and value of each project
One may wonder what is the difference in each stakeholder’s programs in order to decide the project s/he joins or hosts. In spite of some general tendencies and characteristics in each, there is also large diversity of types and quality among the projects organized by the same stakeholder including IVS NGOs. The following questions are to help to judge the nature and value of the project.

STAKEHOLDERS
Is the sending organisation not for profit/ for social good/ not affiliated to political parties or religious orders?
Is the receiving organisation not for profit/ for social good/ not affiliated to political parties or religious orders?
Is the local host not for profit/ for social good/ not affiliated to political parties?
Are the fees (if any) low /affordable?
Are the use of the fees (if any) well explained and fair?

THE PROJECT
Is the project a response to community/ social/ environmental needs?
Are the volunteers’ needs taken into consideration in the project development?
Is the project developed together with the local hosts?
Are effects/outcomes of the project evaluated, both negative and positive?
Is there someone from the local hosts to make a connection with throughout the project?
Is there adequate guidance, coordination, mentoring and leadership during the project?
Are health and other safety issues taken into account and ensured?
Are the living conditions not too far from the local reality, standards and culture?
Does the exchange aim to contribute to a peaceful, fair, sustainable world?
Does the project/work have clear aims and goals?
Does it support and contribute to the SDGs?

THE VOLUNTEERS
Is there a selection process based on the needs of the project and volunteers’ motivation?
Is there a sufficient pre-departure preparation and on arrival orientation for the volunteers?
Is the volunteer provided with adequate information?
Are the volunteers engaged in a collective decision making process?
Is insurance properly/sufficiently provided/guided?
Is the volunteer encouraged to continue engagement after the project, to become active in their own community?
Will there be a follow up with the national volunteers (outgoing and national volunteers)?

THE WORK
Does the work of the volunteer have any negative effect on paid employment?
Is the work meaningful, ethical, contributing to local needs?
Is the work appropriate for volunteers?
Is there a local technical reference person valorising local/traditional knowledge?
Does the work average at least 6 hours a day, 5 days a week?
Is the work sustainable and contributing on a long-term basis?

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
Is there a meaningful opportunity for intercultural exchange/learning?
Is there an element of non-formal learning, an opportunity to develop skills, expand understanding?
Is an opportunity provided to gain knowledge about the local situation and social/regional issues?
Is an opportunity provided to gain knowledge about local issues related to the work?

GENERAL
Is there a mid term evaluation and a final evaluation process?
Are all stakeholders involved in the evaluation process?
Will there be a report at the end of the project?
Does the project comply with data regulations?
Are there written procedures, signed agreements, contingency plans?
Will impact assessment be undertaken?

NETWORKS
Are the sending and receiving organisations part of a network of non-profit IVS organisations?
Do they attend network meetings to evaluate their work and exchange good practices?
Do sending and receiving organisations respect the Universal Charter on IVS?
4. Recommendation for the IVS network  
Improvement and development of IVS

there was a discussion of what IVS should keep/ create/ delete/ change at CCIVS Day 2016. And a SWOT analysis was carried out by the Task Force and. There have been countless discussions and actions made by all the stakeholders of IVS. Yet, there is always space for further improvement on promotion, project/structural management, networking and cooperation.

1. Exchange guidelines
IVS networks and member organizations need to promote more communication, collaboration and coordination between themselves in terms of sharing know-how, expertise and good practices. One of the ways to keep and improve quality is to establish and implement the exchange guidelines as mentioned in 2d.

CCIVS will organize a new project in 2019-20 to revise the IVS handbook which includes all the exchange guidelines for workcamp and LMTV. The objective is to revise these with the members on a global level and with member and sister networks.

2. Researching volunteering
IVS needs visible results from impact research, by including all stakeholders involved in the programmes in the IVS programs in order to have a greater level of external recognition, but also to evaluate our work to see the real impact (positive and negative) in order to improve our processes.

3. Linking with other organisations
IVS could be more globally inclusive and diverse by encouraging more organisations and non-member countries to join the movement. There are many things to learn from each other for the management of the projects and organizations.

4. Common promotion, advocacy and campaigns
The IVS movement has many common values, benefits and targets, which can be improved through working together for volunteer mobilization, advocacy for visa and other political issues and social actions.

5. Learning from others
We can learn more about organisational management as long as we keep our values and principles. For example in: 1. Impact collection and presentation, 2. Marketing and promotion, 3. Quality management and 4. ICT innovations

6. Corresponding to the changing world
The development of global communication system has seen the proliferation of methods to apply independently and directly to a project without the involvement of any sending or receiving organisation. In comparison, IVS organisations offer a safetynet and additional value through a system based on solid partnerships, exchange guidelines and agreements between organisations. Preparation and follow up is standard for all volunteers.
7. Working with the SDGs

CCIVS took the decision in GA 2018 to only talk about how our projects and actions contribute to SDGs - no longer to the 5 themes promoted by the White Paper.

As such we propose this text to promote the SDGs:

Text to promote SDGs and IVS

International Voluntary Service supports resilience, acts for solidarity not charity, and ensures the participation of all from the grassroots to a global level whilst contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

‘The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. The Goals interconnect and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve each Goal and target by 2030’ (SDG website)

IVS has since 1920 sought to respond to the prevalent issues of society on a local and global level, at this time in history we are getting closer to a tipping point, our greatest threat that of total climate breakdown, the result of anthropogenic (man-made) climate change. As Capitalism maintains its grip, widespread inequalities and human rights abuses continue in the world today. The SDGs provide an opportunity for the IVS movement to highlight and measure the impact of our work which focuses on peace through international understanding, friendship and co-operation among the people of the world, particularly youth; sustainable development and protection of the environment; recognition of all cultures in their diversity, emphasising the importance of the world’s cultural heritage; human rights, and individual and national liberation; opposition to all forms of social, cultural, political and economic exploitation.

The IVS movement strives for social justice and rejects all forms of oppression and abuse. We will continue to work for a peaceful world where all are treated equally and with respect.

Possible actions for the SDGs

1. All IVS organisations have been so far collaborating with NGOs and communities directly related to these SDGs. Some IVS NGOs have signed agreements on a local level to support the ideals for these SDGs.
2. Each IVS organisations can indicate which goals of the SDGs are related to each project in the project description (as some already do!)
3. Research the impact for each goal in each project, collect and show them together. This can also help for better planning as PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle!

Possible cooperation with SDGs

1. Work with UN agencies and other sectors/organizations to increase the impact of each project.
2. Join or create the projects and campaign of UN agencies and other sectors/organizations.
3. Organize special common projects or campaigns
5. Goals of IVS


CCIVS will start a new Strategic Planning process in 2019-20 which aims to set up the common visions and goals as well the strategic planning for IVS 2021-2026, it includes members and sister networks.

a. Social goals

IVS has its own goals toward peace, justice and sustainability all over the world. It is important to have continuous efforts to share, confirm and review (if necessary, revise, modify, develop) our goals by all the stakeholders of IVS (NGOs, volunteers, local hosts and people, etc.)

More concrete visions and goals were stated on some specific issues and in some special occasions.
- IVS Position paper on climate justice (see the Annex C)
- IVS Position paper on freedom of movement (see the Annex D)
- CCIVS 70th Anniversary declaration (see the Annex E)

NVDA has a practice to create “2030 Project Goals - Local SDGs” collected from each project of the ground level, corresponding to the achievement of SDGs. See the Annex F for an example.

b. Practical goals

The White Paper has defined the category of “support measures” as follows:

- Networking/ External Partnership
- Capacity Building/ Quality Improvement
- Public Relations/ Promotion
- Impact/ Recognition
- Finance/ Fundraising

As mentioned above, there will be a new Strategic Planning project coordinated by CCIVS in collaboration with all IVS networks, active participation of IVS NGOs and all the relevant stakeholders is needed!

Conclusion

The IVS movement will have its 100 anniversary in 2020. Seeing the situations and trends of the world, the role of IVS is getting even bigger and is more necessary than ever. We hope, that this paper could be actively and effectively used for all the organizations and people relevant to IVS to develop and improve the movement.