



**Field research, data and policy
recommendations on the inclusion
of young migrants, asylum seekers,
refugees and youth from minority
groups in the International Voluntary
Service movement**

extract





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Introduction

The #IVS4Peace Inclusive Voluntary Service for Peace project has focused on improving the strategies of the IVS movement in facilitating the participation of young migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and youth from minority groups in workcamps (international voluntary service - IVS - projects). Along the three and a half years of the project we have created a common strategy to improve the inclusiveness of our workcamps and to ensure that these are spaces for a broad profile of young people that is representative of the diverse realities in our societies and communities.

This document aims at bridging the key learnings that the project partnership has developed along the process, the outcomes of the quantitative and qualitative research carried out at the volunteers and field projects level, and the evidence-based recommendations proposed by the #IVS4Peace partners to the IVS movement, to other youth and international organisations as well as to political institutions. Ensuring social inclusion needs to be a shared and coordinated effort among a wide variety of stakeholders, and we consider that demonstrating the positive impact IVS projects have on all stakeholders is a key element in leveraging institutional partnerships and support to make these projects possible, improve their quality, extend their outreach and ensure their sustainability.

The following pages bring together the policy recommendations developed during the project and the evidence gathered from the field and from the participants themselves through quantitative and qualitative research.



Acceptability

the importance of networking

Most IVS organisations at the moment do not work on a daily basis with young people with fewer opportunities nor with youth from migrant, asylum seeking or refugee backgrounds or youth from minority groups. In order to improve the representativity of our organisations and workcamps and to learn from the experts, we must cooperate with migrant, asylum seeking, refugee or minority organisations and organisations that work on inclusion of these targets. Here we are talking about self-representing organisations, organisations that ensure access to basic rights (accommodation, legal aid, health, education) to migrant, asylum seekers, refugees or minority groups in a non-patronising way, organisations that are rooted in the local community and that are connected with its inhabitants.

Recommendations to IVS organisations

- Seeking a balance between the need to dedicate resources to the removal of accessibility obstacles and the importance of communicating IVS goals and values and the objectives of the project.
- Enhancing inclusion as a means and not as a goal.
- Moving from an integration approach, where the focus is on how the volunteer needs to adapt to the organisation, to an inclusion approach, where the organisation understands their challenges to be open to all diverse profiles.

Recommendations to institutions

Stronger financial support for youth organisations in order to ensure the preparation phase of all actors involved is covered and we can apply an inclusion approach rather than a patronising/integration approach.



Adoption and the preparation of volunteers

During the preparation process of volunteers, there are two key moments to consider: the interview and the training. During the interview, the Sending Organisation gets to know the volunteer better as well as their interests and needs and can better support the placement process of that volunteer in a suitable workcamp. Also, the pre-departure training is an essential process of the preparation phase, where volunteers get to know other youngsters that are going to be involved in workcamps and reflect on their future experience.

Recommendations to IVS organisations

Importance of communicating IVS goals and values and the objectives of the project properly to the prospective volunteers.

Recommendations to institutions

Stronger financial support for youth organisations in order to ensure the preparation phase of all actors involved is covered and we can apply an inclusion approach rather than a patronising/integration approach.



Appropriateness and the preparation process of camp coordinators and hosting organisations

The camp coordinator is the person who leads and facilitates the group and makes the link between the hosting organisation and the volunteers. Given the significance of the role of the camp coordinator in the group dynamics, it is utterly important to train camp coordinators with an inclusive approach before they start their preparation for the workcamp. On the other side, the hosting organisation is the local organisation based in the community where the camp takes place and leads the project where the volunteers will get involved. Hosting Organisations are the link between the volunteers and the local community. Given the importance of their role, it is crucial to ensure the Hosting Organisation is on board to organise an inclusive workcamp.

Recommendations to IVS organisations

- Stressing the preparation of camp coordinators.
- Stressing the preparation of hosting organisations.
- Moving from an integration approach, where the focus is on how the volunteer needs to adapt to the organisation, to an inclusion approach, where the organisation understands their challenges to be open to all diverse profiles.
- Considering the demographic diversity in the local community and ensuring representativity of the community in the participating volunteers.
- Introducing an intersectional and gender perspective into the networking strategies with local social organisations.

Recommendations to institutions

- Stronger financial support for youth organisations in order to ensure the preparation phase of all actors involved is covered and we can apply an inclusion approach rather than a patronising/integration approach.
- Undergoing a demographic research on the reality of youth with fewer opportunities, young migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and youth from minority groups and share that with youth organisations so they can better take care of representativity.
- Introducing an intersectional and gender perspective into youth and volunteering programmes.
- Considering the demographic diversity in the local community and ensuring representativity of the community in the participating volunteers.
- Introducing an intersectional and gender perspective into the networking strategies with local social organisations.



Feasibility and fidelity making it real

The expertise of the #IVS4Peace project partners guaranteed that once the difficult process of outreach and preparation of the volunteers, camps coordinators and hosting communities and organisations finalised, the adaptive framework of international Workcamps would provide all participants with an extraordinary learning experience of personal and social development. The detailed results of the learning path taken by young refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and minority representatives during their volunteering are presented in the following pages of this documents, as evidence of the capacity of IVS organisations to implement successful inclusion practices in the field.

Recommendations to IVS organisations

Prioritising medium and long-term partnerships and involving the concerned organisations in the planning and implementation of grants and activities from the early stages in order to ensure larger outreach and stronger support for the preparation and participation of volunteers.

Recommendations to institutions

Targeted funds and grants that support long-term partnerships and projects facilitating and integrating IVS activities with local organisations representing young migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and youth from minority groups.



Coverage

reaching out to youth, youth reaching out

The #IVS4Peace project allowed partner organisations to work within a larger timeframe than usual with their counterparts and local stakeholders, ensuring a better outreach and follow-up with the participants and hosting communities. An important percentage of returned volunteers reported further engaging in volunteering and active citizenship activities after their camps, both through additional opportunities provided by IVS organisations and via stronger links and inclusion opportunities in their hosting societies. Such a multiplying effect was documented by field observations and interviews in all the countries concerned, and more visible when strong partnerships were established with refugee, asylum seekers and migrants organisations beyond the scope of the participation of youth in the #IVS4Peace volunteer projects only.



The impact of taking part in a Workcamp for volunteers with fewer opportunities

The impact research framework developed participatorily within the CCIVS network, under the leadership of #IVS4Peace project partner Solidarités Jeunesses France and with the support of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, assesses the perceived learning and change after the projects in the volunteers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and perspectives towards key issues and competences, when looking at inclusive practices and the specific outcomes reported by youth with a refugee, asylum seeker, migrant or minority background the possibility of disaggregating the data collected and comparing results with a wider set of participants. This allows us to point out relevant and statistically significant differences, indicating in particular how the feeling of growth is even more pronounced in the participants of the #IVS4Peace and thus confirming that to stronger deployment of resources and partnerships correspond outstanding, potentially life-changing outcomes. While the pages on networking and sustainability remind us of the fragility of such results that depend for their durability on the long-term commitment – including financially – of all stakeholders, data simply show that such investments generate not only personal and social development among the participants, but also accrued well-being.



Sustainability

the importance of evaluation and follow-up with the participants, the partner organisations and the local communities

Many IVS organisations do not stop their work with the volunteers and partner organisations once the workcamp has finished but welcome them back at the end of their international experience and go through an evaluation and participation process at a local level. The quantitative data presented in the previous pages demonstrate the extent and importance of the learning outcomes for the participants and communities involved in terms of communication, dealing with conflict, problem-solving, working in a team, cultural openness, involvement in the community and ultimately life satisfaction. Evaluation practices provide the necessary moments of reflection allowing participants to recognise the skills and competences acquired and plan their utilisation for the betterment of their life. Similarly, the partnerships with likeminded refugees, asylum seekers and migrant organisations and hosting communities require constant monitoring and evaluation in order ensure the coherence of the shared objectives and the durability of common activities and practices.

Recommendations to IVS organisations

Systematically include the evaluation process with the participants and with the partner organisations in the project cycle.

Recommendations to institutions

- Structurally increasing and/or (re-)introducing in the existing grants the financial and human resources dedicated for the evaluation process and the recognition of projects and learning outcomes.
- Respect of the right to Freedom of Movement. UN UDHR Article 13: “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.”

Defending the right to Freedom of Movement

The starting point for youth from migrant, asylum seeking, refugee or minority backgrounds is not the same as other youth in their local communities who want to get involved in volunteering. Even when other conditions would give them the same opportunities to take part in international workcamps abroad, the reality is that there are a lot of administrative troubles or restrictions for them to be able to enjoy their freedom of movement.

As stated in the IVS movement's Freedom of Movement position paper below, some young people who want to take part in workcamps and the organisations that want to support them, find themselves increasingly hampered in this work by movement restrictions that deny many individuals the opportunity for hands-on experience in different countries than their own, learning of other people and cultures as they contribute to host communities that simultaneously gain insight into each other's background and values. At present it is only a tiny minority of the world's population who enjoys anything like real freedom of movement.



Read the full document



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