

The State of the Art of IVS

STEP to change: a global and regional diagnosis built through a participatory process including field visits, trainings, discussions in four regions, 20 countries and six regional and interregional meetings



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Presentation

This document is the result of the work and discussions with over a hundred people from 20 organisations in four regions, plus the network representatives, all along two years of work.

This State of the Art has been worked as a fundamental document to be used for the development and implementation of long-term strategies, aiming at the empowerment of IVS organisations.

The goals of this diagnosis are

- > to understand, first, inside the movement (and beyond), what are the main capacities and needs in the movement; and
- > to strategise, second: use the diagnosis to build mid and long-term strategic proposals.

The strategic needs and proposals identified here will need external support in order to be implemented, and that is why this State of the Art aims also to be helpful in the creation of synergies with external actors.

The contents you will find here go as follows:

A methodological introduction:

Which explains the STEPS process where this diagnosis has been produced and the main methodology used.

A regional and global diagnosis

It includes: general overviews, one chapter per region, and one chapter approaching the global scope; a final chapter introducing a draft strategy paper for the long-term programme of empowerment and monitoring.

Critical analysis chapters about IVS and its system

Which gather critical aspects which have been identified during the process, and reflect the conclusions and proposals on how to address them.

Hopefully this will be a useful document for any reader who has it in front, and is willing to contribute to IVS as such, or to its goals of community change, peace-building, intercultural relations, citizen participation and empowerment, ...

Enjoy the reading, and contribute to the future strategies!

Methodology

A methodological introduction: STEPS and its organisational development approach and methods

How this diagnosis was built: the STEPS process and methodologies

The STEP project, implemented by CCIVS between 2017 and 2018 in the framework of the Erasmus+ program, turned around two main axis:

- > *the central one*, of organisational capacity building (both at local-national level and at the regional one), diagnosis and analysis of the current status of IVS organisations in each region; and
- > *the supporting one*, of research and impact assessment at the level of the hosting projects and local communities.

Regarding the **organisational capacity building axis**, the project utilised the Organisational Pentagon methodology (built originally by Fundación SES, Argentina, a CCIVS member organisation), which over the past years has been further adapted and developed by CCIVS team of trainers and experts (among which the Artisans of Change), to respond to the needs and reality of the movement, the STEPS project and its partners. Nowadays, the Pentagon methodology is a full set of practice and theory which works as an increasingly common language for organisational assessment, training and strategy building. It has also been applied to the assessment of CCIVS as a network, and to other kinds of social initiatives beyond the movement.

The following Diagnosis of the State of the Art of IVS, has both a regional (for Africa, America, Asia and Europe) and a global scope, largely based on the five dimensions of the Pentagon methodology: Structure, Functioning, Communication, Relationships, Financial Sustainability of the organisations.

The **second axis of the project, that of research**, is the object of a separate report that will also contribute important and complementary elements of analysis, mostly from the perspective of the hosting communities, to better understand the complexity of IVS organisations.

The STEP activities involved 21 different IVS organisations, following a specular model in each region:

1. First, all the project partners from the same continent met for a regional training (in Ghana for the African one, Costa Rica for the American, Cambodia for Asia and FYROM for Europe respectively);
2. After the training, field visits were organised at each participating country, during which the participants who had attended the regional trainings (two per country, 10 in total per each region) would now act as trainers, with the support of the experts from CCIVS team, for their own team-mates, board and staff, of their own organisation; in addition, visits to local hosting communities were organised to run interviews for impact assessment, of the host organisation's IVS projects.
3. For the national trainings, also implemented following the Pentagon methodology, a selection was done of specific issues of particular relevance for the organisations

concerned and its partners in the country, often reaching out to several more people from within and outside the IVS organisations involved.

The analysis below is therefore based on the trainings, visits, observations, exchanges and feedback performed and received by participants and the CCIVS experts during the whole process, reflecting interactions with over a hundred people from the regions of Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo and Uganda); America (Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru); Asia (Cambodia, India, Hong Kong, Korea, Thailand); Europe (Catalonia, France, FYROM, Greece, Hungary).

While the organisations and countries concerned are far from giving a complete image of the much wider network, they constitute a solid sample raising important issues and questions for the State of the Art of IVS at the regional and global levels.

An introduction to the method: the Organisational Pentagon theory, a systemic approach to organisational development

The introduction provided here has the main purpose of making it easier to understand the dimensions and order of the diagnosis provided for each region. For a deeper explanation of the model, please consult the annexes.

The model/ theory of the Organisational Pentagon has advanced through the STEPS project to become an organisational development methodology adapted to IVS orgs' needs and a common language for organisational development in the network. It explains that there are 5 main dimensions in one organisation (Structure, Functioning, Communication, Relations, Financial Sustainability) and that the health of the organisation depends both on how strong each of these dimensions is, and also on the balance between one another.

Therefore, an organisation can hardly be healthy if one or two of its dimensions is really not doing well. But the organisation will also experience challenges if some of its dimensions is overdeveloped in comparison to the others.

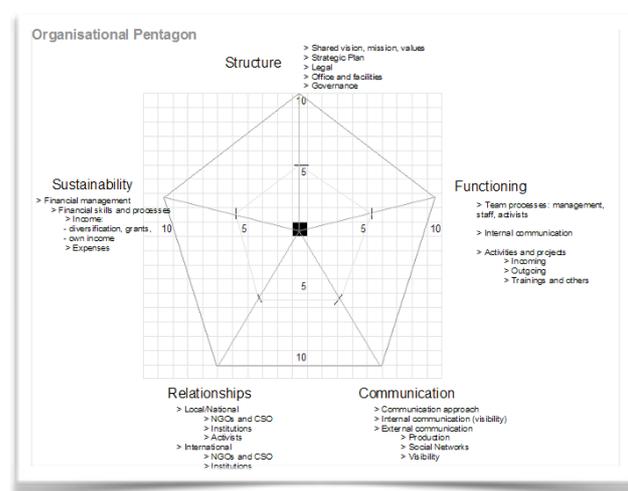
The aspect of the interrelation between dimensions is also very helpful, as through understanding which are the stronger dimensions in our organisation we can identify them as “engines”, “potentialities” to develop the weaker ones.

The use of the pentagon as we have developed it may have three main purposes:

1. The Pentagon for pedagogic uses: a systemic understanding of an organisation

Methodologies which use the Organisational Pentagon as a basis model usually are very practical, and oriented to diagnose and transform specific organisations or initiatives that are participating in a training.

However, this main use should not hide the parallel functionality of the tool: that people learn to understand better their organisation, to acquire a more systemic understanding



of their organisation; or, in general, of what an organisation is, what it needs, and how it works to transform it. Therefore, the methodology can be used as a basis for organisational development training for organisations.

2. The Pentagon to diagnose the own organisation

The model includes activities that allow to provide an overview (or a general diagnosis) of the organisation, which involve the creation of the shape of the pentagon for each organisation. Besides, there are specific methods that allow to deepen the diagnosis for each dimension.

Regarding the general diagnosis, several exercises can be used. As a first main tool, a Questionnaire where participants reflect on fundamental aspects of each dimension for their organisation, provides a deep and complete insight on the main needs and strengths of the organisation.

Regarding the in-depth diagnosis for each dimension, several methodologies are used next to the pentagon: maps of actors, for relationships; budget analysis for finances; etc.

3. The Pentagon to build the own development strategy

The understanding of an organisation through a systemic view, helps bringing a more structured approach for development planning for the organisation. As mentioned, seeing (both in detailed items and in general dimensions; and also with a graphic representation) how the organisation is built, where their strengths are, weaknesses and balances; allows to set goals, make decisions, and organise mid and long term plans for development. The diagnosis draws the starting point; and the strategic planning takes advantage of the main forces of the organisation to improve the weak areas.

The 5 dimensions that shape an organisation

The Pentagon model states that an organisation can be understood looking at 5 main dimensions, which also relate to each other in a system of connections and balances.

The first diagnostic part working with the pentagon will allow to analyse each of the sub-items included within each dimension (see the squares below, on the right of each dimension). For the organisational development training of the STEP to Change, we have prioritised specific topics in each of them.

Structure: This dimension looks at what the organisation is: its body, skeleton, identity. The facilities (office, training center, properties); how it is defined in its constitution: its goals, its aim, the values; how the organisation is planned; who are the people who lead it, how they decide, how they agree, etc.

An issue that determines strongly the strength of an organisation is a shared vision and values among all members of an organisation, and decision making and planning processes which correspond to them.

- > Shared vision, mission, values
- > Strategic Plan
- > Legal
- > Office and facilities
- > Governance

Functioning: This dimension looks at what this organisation does. There are 2 main areas in the functioning part:

- > the first, about the teams -staff, board, volunteers- in the organisation: how they work, relate to each other, manage, train, etc;

- > Team processes: management, staff, activists
- > Internal communication
- > Activities and projects
 - > Incoming
 - > Outgoing
 - > Trainings and others

> the second, about the projects: what are the main projects and activities of the organisation, how they work, which impact they produce, etc.

Key factors for the wellness in this dimension are the empowerment of the internal teams, good internal communication; and also a work with quality, sustainability and positive impact in projects and actions.

Communication: This dimension looks at how this organisation talks: how it understands the fact itself of “talking” (and listening), how it talks within the organisation, how it talks for public relations, what it produces to “talk”.

(Re-) understanding that communication is one of our most vital needs (as beings and organisations) and the basis for any good relation within and outside the organisation. Consider our strategic stakeholders to adapt our communication to the needs and nature of that relationship.

Relations: This dimension looks at how this organisation lives with others: which relationships it has, with whom they work, how they work together, how relations are built.

We start from the believe that, however good we are, we will never be able to solve all world's challenges (even ours) alone, so it is needed to work with others. How are our relations built? Which are the ones that are more strategic for our organisation and why? How to develop the relations with those which are strategic to us?

Finances: This dimension looks at what the organisation has (and how it is managed). This means the resources and its administration: the economy of the organisation. The importance of the existing capacities to understand and perform financial management is vital for an organisation. On the other hand, how the needed income is structured (where it comes from, in which proportion), how to set dynamics to produce income; and of course the structure of expenses and its management.

- > Communication approach
 - > Internal communication (visibility)
 - > External communication
 - > Production
 - > Social
- Networks

- > Local/National
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions
 - > Activists
- > International
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions

- > Financial management
 - > Financial skills and processes
 - > Income:
 - diversification, grants,
 - own income
 - > Expenses

Diagnosis

Regional and Global Diagnosis of the IVS State of the Art

The diagnosis you are about to read was built through a long sequence of exercises: individual self-diagnosis of the organisation, in-depth analysis in international trainings, followed by on-the-field assessment with each organisation, and then analysis work by experts and network representatives.

A large amount of information was produced (individual questionnaires, charts of results per each dimension of the pentagon, final written individual assessments per organisation after the visits; etc.), mainly about individual organisations, which was kept by them for their own use, and it will not be found here. Despite such details would provide many key aspects and much more enlightenment, the process needed some confidentiality for organisations to open and play the game. So such informations have hopefully been useful for the participating organisations, and are somehow distilled here.

The aim of such diagnosis has been:

For the organisations:

- > To understand better their own capacities and needs
- > To be able to build strategic action from such diagnosis

For the regions, networks and the movement:

- > To understand the particularities of each member and each region, and also be able to draw main conclusions of the global reality of the movement.
- > To be able to design collectively future strategies, as well as a monitoring dynamic that allows the movement to have more cohesion, and be healthier.
- > To find support for such strategies, both within the movement's actors, and outside the movement.

What you will find in the following pages:

> *A first sample of the diagnosis*, an interpretation of the organisational Pentagons per region (these pentagons result of making the average of the results of the diagnosis of participants per region). This is an exercise that we have done per each organisation, and here it can give a first very general idea of interesting issues related to the regions, according to the particular realities of organisations which joined the projects.

> *A summary table* that shows the main contents of an agreed diagnosis (agreed on its final stage during the final seminar in Holloko), based on the several steps walked during the project.

> *A more detailed diagnosis*, first considering the global trends observed, and then region by region. This diagnosis, in coherence with the whole process, proceeds addressing each of the 5 dimensions of the pentagon.

> *A first approach to a strategic plan* for the long-term training programme, or the Empowerment and Monitoring system.

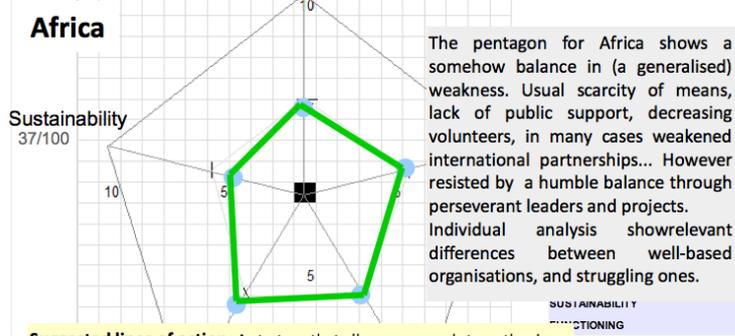
It is to be considered that,

on the one hand, as we are addressing general trends in each region, some organisation in such region may not feel reflected in some of the aspects mentioned; this was needed, for the sake of synthesis, not to compile every detail that would, anyway, improve the precision.

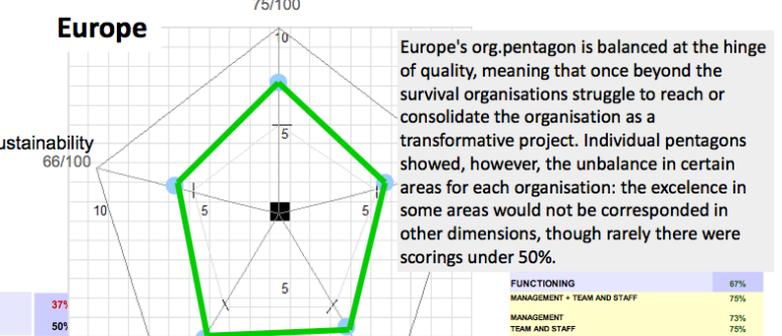
on the other hand, these general conclusions about regions are necessarily partial, based on a sample of 5 orgs per region -who of course can also talk about regional realities, besides their own-; so, not being able yet to publish something about the 200 orgs in the movement, we had to start with the first 20, their networks and the 4 regions.

An overview of the different regions according to the pentagon results

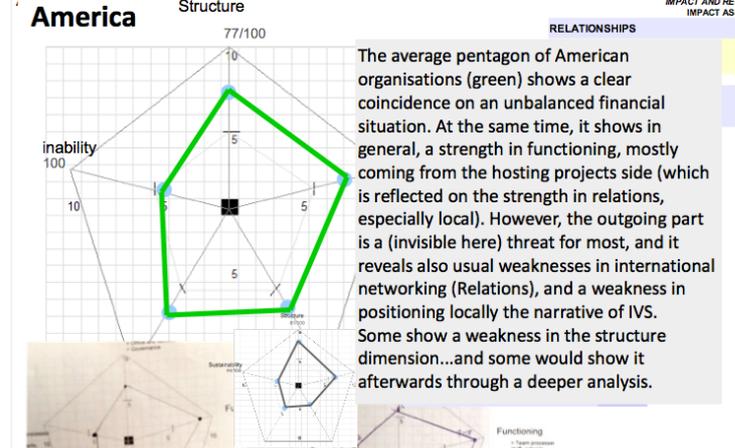
The following diagrams show the results of the average of self-diagnosis of organisations in each region. As an average, it does not show for the real diversity within each region, but it is useful to see some trends and indications. It is relevant to note that these are based on questionnaires before the trainings, where perceptions changed significantly in some areas.



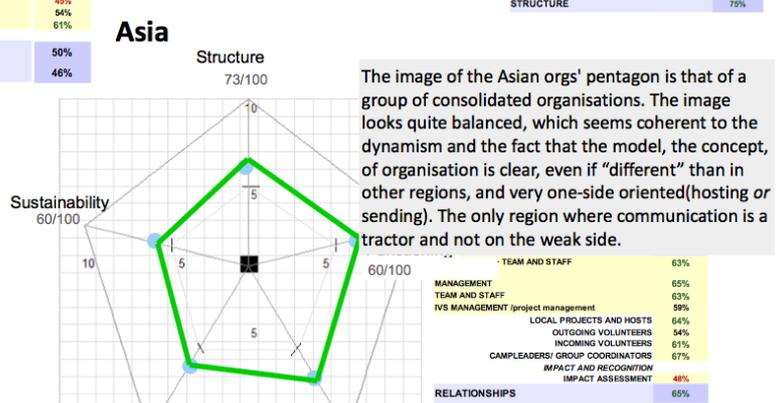
Suggested lines of action: A strategy that allows a general strengthening of the organisations, most likely through strategic planning, using main strengths (international networking, local community projects) to leverage the change: for example with strategic partnerships and/or a financial development plan linked to them



Suggested lines of action: In this case, strengthening the areas which in the organisation are the less balanced in the pentagon, and prepare to address the jump towards deeper goals in the organisation. Usually, in Europe, the social concern on democratic governance, together with the professionalisation of organisations, point at the strengthening of social basis, usually led by a collective and inclusive process of strategic planning..



Suggested lines of action: Using the developed local networks as a tractor to develop the outgoing areas, and to strengthen their international relations. Strategic planning that includes international strategic partnerships, and regional networking to support capacity building of local leaders



Suggested lines of action: Having a consolidated model of organisations (and the ability and dynamics of innovation) can allow to address improvements on areas which may be long-term unbalances (one-sided exchanges, one-sided sources of income) and at the same time take the opportunity for international leadership: sharing innovative models and raising funds for the region for interregional and regional cooperation.

	General Issues	Structure	Functioning	Communication	Relations	Sustainability
Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Process of building again the shared identity and concept of IVS, is needed and will be valuable. > Reciprocity, as a core value of IVS, needs to be assessed and reinforced. > Diagnosis process is an empowering practice for the movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > As long history of some organisations is a pride and an asset, it is sometimes also a burden, especially in times of renovation. > Difficulties in the renovation of leaderships. > Existing assets, infrastructures, which could act as leverage for strategic development plans in the organisations or in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A hosting region, with low outgoing capacity. > Difficulties on increasing capacity building in the orgs. The networking dynamics with other regions have been positive for staff capacity building. > Recommended to develop strategic partnerships that allow to strengthen exchange and capacities. > Possibility to experiment with "new" volunteering practices (group, family, ...) > Powerful community projects at the local level which are little known by international partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > There is a gap between the interesting projects that exist at the community level in the region, and the level of knowledge there is of such work in other regions. This situation has to do with the formats and themes which are communicated in the IVS system, which privilege the technical and "commercial" type of information, above of the deep community development narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > There is a sense of "African brotherhood" between orgs. And a will for regional cooperation beyond existing challenges. Subregional networks have different cooperation levels: Eastern Africa keeps being very active (with shared projects, trainings, etc.); Western Africa faces the language difference, and weakness of some members, though there are some exchanges of volunteers and trainers. > Recommendation of support systems: intra-regional and inter-regional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > What is of course an asset of the African organisations is (resilience) that they find their ways to ensure continuity despite the instability of several factors, which lead to less available resources in the country and usually changes in the incoming volunteers. > Lack of access to public or private funds, and very low outgoing practice, makes a total dependency of the hosting of volunteers as a source of income. > The existence of infrastructural assets can be a very useful resource for organisations willing to start a strategic financial development process
Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Socioeconomic and political situations (conflicts, poverty,...) in the region affect the balance and sustainability of organisations. > Sometimes also language is a barrier for intra-regional cooperation, and "francophone" countries find it harder to extend their interregional cooperation. > Financial difference and scarcity of resources in the organisations and their countries affects their partnerships and participation in international exchanges and volunteering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Some organisations have a strong structure behind that may support not only their own improvement, but that of the region. > Most of the participating American organisations were in transitional process, especially regarding their needs of a renovation of leadership. > Collective strategic planning processes were recommended to strengthen the sense of belonging, shared visions, and also the leadership capacities of other members in the organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The main practice in the region relays more on MLTV than on workcamps. > Participating partners were mostly ICYE oriented; which in general frames quite much the practice into long-term, more standardised. > The development of an outgoing area or dynamic in their organisations was a shared interest or priority by several participating orgs. Considering the lack of tradition of IVS in these countries, and the difficulties to access the professionalised practices in other regions, it seems relevant to advise strategic cooperation with organisations in other regions to develop such area. > Existing competences in the region to lead learning and mutual support processes on diverse priority needs; missing the dynamics and funds to implement it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > As the context is of lack of tradition of IVS in the countries, a main issues is to build a narrative that shows the interest of volunteering. > Usually organisations lack of a communication strategy, though in general some action is done in social networks. > Given the need for takeover of new leaderships in the organisations, and sometimes the lack of understanding by some staff of the meaning of IVS, processes of internal communication, such as what a strategic planning process would be, are again advisable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Most developed relations are local networks with community actors, due to the fact that they are mostly hosting organisations. > At inexistence of public funds for IVS purposes, orgs work usually with private funds. This generates internal debates on ethical standards for partnerships. > Internationally, ICYE orgs have a clearer orientation as standards and procedures are quite defined. Non-ICYE orgs, and some of them also, find it hard to be oriented and participate in the international networking. > Regionally, the absence of a regional platform or network weakens the American orgs. Strong commitment by some orgs, and dynamising exchanges of young members, would be needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A common element is the complete dependency of hosting volunteers. That is an element of vulnerability. > Developing the outgoing area (besides improving reciprocity) is seen as key by many organisations to stabilise their economy. > The interest raised when working on budget analysis, financial literacy, and also the strategic financial development plans, raise the point that these areas should be approach in future capacity building.

	General Issues	Structure	Functioning	Communication	Relations	Sustainability
America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The national contexts influence much in the capacity of hosting/ sending of American organisations: in some cases, the image of the country is a bit asset (i.e. Costa Rica), for others it creates organisational instability (i.e. Mexico) > Volunteering, at least as IVS, is not a traditional and rooted practice in most American countries (other forms of social commitment), so there is an ongoing difficulty to position and develop the practice of IVS in the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Some organisations have a strong structure behind that may support not only their own improvement, but that of the region. > Most of the participating American organisations were in transitional process, especially regarding their needs of a renovation of leadership. > Collective strategic planning processes were recommended to strengthen the sense of belonging, shared visions, and also the leadership capacities of other members in the organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The main practice in the region relays more on MLTV than on workcamps. > Participating partners were mostly ICYE oriented; which in general frames quite much the practice into long-term, more standardised. > The development of an outgoing area or dynamic in their organisations was a shared interest or priority by several participating orgs. Considering the lack of tradition of IVS in these countries, and the difficulties to access the professionalised practices in other regions, it seems relevant to advise strategic cooperation with organisations in other regions to develop such area. > Existing competences in the region to lead learning and mutual support processes on diverse priority needs; missing the dynamics and funds to implement it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > As the context is of lack of tradition of IVS in the countries, a main issues is to build a narrative that shows the interest of volunteering. > Usually organisations lack of a communication strategy, though in general some action is done in social networks. > Given the need for takeover of new leaderships in the organisations, and sometimes the lack of understanding by some staff of the meaning of IVS, processes of internal communication, such as what a strategic planning process would be, are again advisable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Most developed relations are local networks with community actors, due to the fact that they are mostly hosting organisations. > At inexistence of public funds for IVS purposes, orgs work usually with private funds. This generates internal debates on ethical standards for partnerships. > Internationally, ICYE orgs have a clearer orientation as standards and procedures are quite defined. Non-ICYE orgs, and some of them also, find it hard to be oriented and participate in the international networking. > Regionally, the absence of a regional platform or network weakens the American orgs. Strong commitment by some orgs, and dynamising exchanges of young members, would be needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A common element is the complete dependency of hosting volunteers. That is an element of vulnerability. > Developing the outgoing area (besides improving reciprocity) is seen as key by many organisations to stabilise their economy. > The interest raised when working on budget analysis, financial literacy, and also the strategic financial development plans, raise the point that these areas should be approach in future capacity building.
Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Huge region with socio-econ-pol Souths and Norths within, and sub-regions. > The NVDA-like orgs (quite young, dynamic, innovative) and SCI-like (historical, long-term dynamics) face quite different challenges. Most orgs in STEPS were NVDA members. > Orgs either very oriented to sending (north) and therefore also to "personal devpt" narrative; or to hosting (south), and thence to "community devpt". Both, though, with very developed networks on their speciality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Mostly relatively young (1-2 decades) orgs. Collectively led by NVDA a real reference for IVS in the region. > The more hierarchical culture of power management -broadly accepted within organisations- brings sometimes challenges when it is time to assume new responsibilities for staff members. > Trainings on leadership skills have been proposed by members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Hosting oriented (south) and sending oriented (north) organisations. > Increasing number of group volunteering projects, which tend to equal numbers with workcamps. > And compensate decrease in volunteers at workcamps. > Decrease in workcamps is serious and leads orgs to find alternatives; sometimes contradictory as this has meant sometimes considering or using voluntourism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Public communication is quite powerful in several organisations (both at social networks and PR) > Sometimes the hierarchical structure affects the flow of internal communication, producing challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Very developed network of relations both in hosting and sending orgs: with public institutions, universities, private companies, local partners... supporting, sending, providing funds for projects and volunteers. > NVDA plays a strong networking role, communication among members, point of reference. A success factor for IVS devpt in the region. > NVDA and CCIVS have regular interaction and cooperation. Asian members suggested that NVDA could represent and coordinate CCIVS projects in Asia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Though the type of income is quite limited to one (either the outgoing or the hosting of volunteers), within this main and only type of income, there seem to be a diversification of sources (volunteers, universities, public funds, CSR,...). > So, in part a vulnerability (dependance on one type), which is though quite diversified. > Suggestion to perform exchanges on income generation initiatives.
Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > European organisations tend to have a relatively more stabilised structure (if they are professionalised), number of staff and access to capacity building. > Level of regional networking is very high and intra-regional exchange also; due to consolidated networks and existence of public funds (national, European). This situates usually the level of exigence of orgs when they self-evaluate more on the level of quality than on basic stability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Main challenges around strategic planning, collective construction of the orgs, widening of social basis, and democratisation of leadership, empowerment of activists. > The difference between professionalised (stable) and non-professionalised orgs, indicates also the institutional pressure (public, european) towards institutionalisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Region with longest tradition, and highest figures both in sending and hosting volunteers. > Decrease in IVS figures starts and affects specially in Europe: less outgoing volunteers, less hosting projects (less funds for hosting). > Better opportunities for capacity building for staff (training, staff exchange, evaluation and networking events,...). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Issues oriented to the capacity to mobilise potential volunteers. > And to seeking recognition as relevant actors. > Interest on finding and consolidating a narrative, stories that "position" that IVS is worth. > Suggestion that building new communities of interested people may need to develop focussed long-term relations with some focussed groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Very intense and rich networking life, with several networks of reference (Alliance, SCI, ICYE,...) > The very strong dynamic makes the European action quite self-referencial. > Diversity of networks make it difficult for other regions to have a clear reference point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Despite since the last economic crisis, orgs struggled for survival, now still orgs define as a financial privilege the situation. > Formed by the existence of funds that allow orgs to have a staff and projects; the capacity of people to travel and volunteer; and the possibility for orgs to get funds for inter-regional projects. > This puts European organisations in a position of power, which, despite the efforts to manage it fairly, should need to be counterbalanced.

A diagnosis with a Global scope: from regions to system

The IVS movement is formed by a huge diversity of organisations:

regionally, being in over 90 countries opens the scope to a huge range of cultures, and social, political and economic realities that influence deeply, either the shape, the actions and dynamics of organisations;

thematically, there are some organisations which are more specialised on a specific approach or thematic (social, environmental, peace actions,...), considering that for many organisations, volunteering is their main or only specialisation (and local partners are the ones that have a specific thematic work);

in terms of size or organisational structure, there is a majority of what we would call small organisations (3 to 10 staff); and also some minority of middle or big organisations, with larger staff and also decentralised staff in different regions of the country where they are based. Also, there is an axis between the professionalised organisations (working with paid staff) and those based on volunteers.

chronologically, there are organisations (and networks) which have existed for decades - soon some of them will reach a century - and some are very young (10 or 5 years of existence). For those which are older, there are some which have kept the leadership of the founders (and it becomes a bigger challenge to find the handover process for new leaderships) and some have gone through various processes of handing over the leadership over the decades.

Of course, there may be other categories which are relevant to show and inspire the differences to be addressed when looking at the movement. Somehow, what brings cohesion and unity (the reasons why there is a movement) is both the identity of values and common goals, a shared idea of what is volunteering, and a space to build it together: through agreements, standards, procedures, training, analysis in common, initiatives and personal-collective relations. Such space are networks and its working groups or long-term initiatives; and also the transnational, regional, global projects and initiatives. Among the networks, there is both

diversity -again-: we find networks which are merely regional: EAWA (Eastern Africa), WAVAN (West Africa), SAWC (South African), NVDA (Asia); others which are European-based, but with other regions' members (Alliance), and some based in Europe, with interregional dynamics (SCI, ICYE); and finally of course, a global network (the CCIVS).

and coordination and unity: several networking spaces are organised all along the year, some regular (general assemblies, technical meetings, evaluation meetings, staff exchanges...), some depending of specific programmes; and some of these spaces are even for the global and cross-network coordination and cooperation.

This is, no doubt, one of the main assets and richnesses of the movement and of each individual organisation. Networks, networking opportunities, and the processes of knowledge exchange, establishment of agreed procedures, and development of fruitful relations are on the basis of any success of IVS life.

The present diagnosis, in any case, does not aim at analysing all possible interesting areas of the existence of IVS, but particularly (as it was the focus of the project), those related to the

health and strength of the organisations. We are tackling organisational health, from the point of view that healthy organisations are more capable to address their social transformation goals.

During the process of diagnosis, which was undertaken mostly at the organisational and regional level, some elements have been identified to belong to the more global scope; some other elements have been understood as global ones, once the 4 regional experiences had been finished and it was time to reflect about general conclusions.

IVS identity: revising the core and considering new times

Among such general questions some regard the IVS identity itself (what are our values nowadays? what changed? how the changes in our way of working are changing our identity as a movement?), and some other regard the new way of being IVS according to changing social realities (what are the new interests of our potential volunteers? how do people, and especially, how do young people think, wish, feel attracted for experiences like, for example, IVS?).

An internal communication process and planning should respond to the first range of issues (our identity) and research should respond to the second (social identities), and then a dialectic process should be established among both realities.

What about reciprocity?

A very suggesting and challenging discussion goes around on of the root values of IVS: reciprocity. We could ask nowadays is reciprocity still a value of IVS? In many international and inter-regional exchanges, such reciprocity is difficult to see, and it is not evident whether it is even a shared value by all. As this is a possible major, fundamental change, this issue should be addressed carefully.

Some elements to take into account:

- > Reciprocity may not necessarily mean an exact number of hosting/sending with a partner. But it does mean that there should be some -any- correspondence in figures, in reciprocal exchanges and flows, and efforts to host from both sides.
- > This question affects the vision (and core values) of IVS
- > If we observe the patron of international relations (outside IVS), of capitalism and global systems of domination... it is relevant to raise the question: are we reproducing/ mirroring mainstream (and unfair) North-South relations?

Such questions have been addressed and debated in the final seminar of the STEPS process, and results can be found in a *specific chapter* of this report.

A shared diagnostic process has a transformative power

In any case, the fact itself of building a collaborative, but at the same time systematic and experiential diagnosis has proved to have a transformative potential in itself in addressing such questions. As a consequence, there has been a proposal to extend this practice (specifically the construction of this present diagnosis) to the diverse fora where international networks meet.

Structure

- > Shared vision, mission, values
- > Strategic Plan
- > Legal
- > Office and facilities
- > Governance

Building again a self-definition to bond around it

As stated above, several issues regarding the vision and the self-definition of the movement are on the table. The definition of *what is IVS and what it is not* is in a process of construction (addressed by global working groups, but also tackled by the CCIVS EC and in the STEPs seminars), as a self-expressed need, first of all for an internal recognition and orientation; and secondly, but also importantly, in order to build a correct image which projects the movement externally.

Leadership transitions

When we bring our focus into the organisations' structure, a common element observed in several regions were the challenges in ensuring a good leadership transition process within the organisations (this usually involves take-over processes between different generations).

We may suggest that CCIVS and the networks could support member organisations on setting and implementing their transition strategies. Networks could even incorporate, in their long-term programmes, a training module that regularly offers opportunities to learn in such issues, or also design some support processes for such transitions-strengthening of collective leaderships.

As the CCIVS has also pointed out recently that there is also the need to support such processes for the transition and sharing leadership for the network itself, this seems to be a strategic point to implement.

Existing infrastructures are a shared asset for IVS strategic development

On another level, the regional and global diagnosis allowed to detect the existence of infrastructures belonging to IVS organisations, and that such infrastructures, which usually at the organisations have not been regarded as potential leverage assets for long-term organisational development strategies, open a window for future development, both at the IVS organisation to which an infrastructure belongs and also, at the regional and interregional level, to potentiate networking and common development strategies.

This aspect seems to connect interestingly with the CCIVS EC proposal to develop Competence Centers. A recommendation to be done could be to *make an inventory of the existing infrastructures* in the different regions, and then *invite them to make part of a collective programme*.

This could work by setting a basic framework that willing members could implement (within a range from minimum standards until high performance centers according to their reality/capacities), and probably design and offer support programmes for the development of synergies at the local and global level.

Functioning

- > Team processes:
management, staff, activists
- > Internal communication
- > Activities and projects
 - > Incoming
 - > Outgoing
 - > Trainings and others

Permanent, global and transversal capacity building programmes

An important element at the global scope is to be able to respond to the need of capacity building, at the organisations level and also regionally.

In general it has proved to be difficult to structure and sustain long-term experiences (permanent programmes, or consecutive coherent ones, that address the organisational needs of members). But also it is difficult to design processes which penetrate along the chain of actors in the IVS: benefitting as many and diverse specific people/staff inside the organisation, who could at their turn strengthen the organisation and become multipliers locally-regionally; and beyond that, benefit as well the needs of local hosts and communities, which globally, share goals as well, and may grow competences together.

One of the difficulties for interregional support is the combination of visa and financial difficulties in the South, combined with short-term (1 year) financed projects, which do not allow permanent opportunities. A possible solution for that would be to stimulate such opportunities at the regional (and not only the interregional) level.

Another possible solution may be to work in a synergic way, considering the arrangement of bilateral or trilateral strategic relations (Relations dimension), that may allow to launch more long-term programmes, which would complement and generate synergies the “official” CCIVS activities.

The dialogue with community agents needs to be continuous and deep

In terms of IVS projects organised by members, the impact assessment interviews have led to deep reflections on the need to keep alive the flow of communication and mutual assessment in the relations with local communities. This is key, in order to ensure with local partners a lively and well-oriented process around volunteering, which allows to follow the vision, to achieve the goals for each stakeholder as much as possible. The process should also involve a clarification of the role of volunteers and of the project, so that, even if stakeholders may not come up with a 100% common understanding of it, at least a common ground is shared, evidenced, and guaranteed.

Quality standards not completely known or applied: time for collective revision

Along with these lines of improving and assessing the quality, it has also been stressed that the existing guidelines (quality standards) and some of the procedures, need to be revised, are antiquated. Considering the work that has been done during STEPs programme, of assessing in which way and to which extent organisations are fulfilling quality standards in their projects, the moment would be appropriate to start a participatory process to update and improve the mechanisms, standards and guidelines which are the common framework for all members in the IVS movement.

Communication

- > Communication approach
- > Internal communication (visibility)
- > External communication
 - > Production
 - > Social Networks
 - > Visibility

Regarding communication, an important challenge stands out in this diagnosis. It seems to be needed to make a deep work on how we explain one another our visions, missions and main projects, as organisations so that the work that we do can be reinforced, according to our vision, our values, our needs.

The communication of IVS projects inside the IVS system is too technical (commercial) and too little on contents

Internally, it has been identified that, after many years of cooperation between organisations, it is very little known what are the real change-making proposals, community development goals and achievements behind the projects of IVS partners. On the other hand, it is very clear for every staff what are the actions volunteers are going to do, the thematic of the work, dates, special requirements. This shows that, inside the huge flow of information and communication which exists regularly regarding projects and IVS, the system has prioritised the technical questions, even the more commercial aspects of the exchange. While the effort of putting up the *community change* visions, the why's and the victories (the reasons why we work and cooperate) has been left aside, even forgotten. This is especially relevant in interregional cooperation, as there are usually less spaces for exchange, getting to know the projects, etc. and therefore very relevant aspects are not easy to experience or exchange. As a consequence, cooperation weakens, together with trust, sometimes; and also the flow of volunteers resents.

Maybe it is fair, even if provocative, to comment a certain *commercialisation* of the system, of a *marketing-isation* of our communication? It happens that with our communication among the IVS organisations, people/orgs are able to be clearly aware of the possibilities to *participate/consume* in programmes, but not at all to understand the vision behind, the community sense and the achievements of the project/organisation in their communities.

The building of a narrative of community change also needed for public communication

And this connects to a more global priority in the building of narratives which can explain better the role of IVS, its significance, its impact and the model that it proposes. Such narratives are needed to consolidate its positioning, to improve its recognition in the global level and also at the national and local one. At a moment of decreasing figures, but as well of renovation of methodologies, partners, projects, it is very much needed to build a message, to articulate a narrative, and to design strategies to create new bonds with communities (not only host communities, also collectives which may at some point participate or support) which may become main stakeholders for the IVS, locally and internationally.

Relations

- 
- > Local/National
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions
 - > Activists
 - > International
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions

Those who don't access the international networking life go weak: need of supporting systems

The existence of a strong networking dynamic is fundamental for the needs of IVS. There is a clear benefit for the movement (and its organisations) in organising and participating at the existing regular meeting events, either more technical (technical meetings, evaluations,...) or more political (general assemblies, global meetings, CCIVS day, etc.).

In fact, it is easy to observe how STEPS partners who have experienced a decrease in their partnerships, and have less and less dynamism in IVS exchanges in their countries, have lately lost the track of participating in such international events. IVS requires organisations to be lively at the international level, and being updated in relations, technical issues and trends within the movement.

In order to set up a system which could reinforce global cooperation, and help strengthen weaker partners, it is suggested to consider a support system, to support the strategic needs of some members. This on the one hand would mean:

- > generate *knowledge available for any member* (guidelines for those who can not directly participate in support actions), standardised protocols to be used to launch initiatives,...
- > identify a list of members willing to be “supported”
- > identify a list of orgs interested in supporting and generating a “buddy system” of strategic relations. With such organisations create a group willing to develop strategic partnerships with weaker organisations in other regions (or the same), to support them by hosting their volunteers (support outgoing), maybe developing parallel programmes in the same direction of the general long-term network projects, etc.

So part of the idea of mutual support, which is in the core values of IVS, among organisations may be implemented by the networks (agreeing on frameworks for reciprocity, from guidelines to exchange programmes, solidarity funds, participation opportunities in trainings by covering costs, etc.), but also by individual members or working groups, who can establish bilateral-trilateral strategic cooperation systems that may benefit all parties.

This idea of the mutual support is also at the basis of the concept of a network. The Empowerment and Monitoring system that the CCIVS is committed to implement with its members should be an answer to such need. The mentioned system can be very much benefitted not only from a long-term funded programme, but also from the reinforcement of the leaderships within the regions, both with the actions of focal points, the strengthening/ reactivation of existing or potential networks, and the promotion of the Competence Centers in every region.

Financial Sustainability



Need to raise funds in Asia, America, Africa to build new cooperations

A structural question would be to enhance the regional capacities to build the own funds and bring forwards projects which are autonomous from Europe; otherwise the whole movement keeps moving with an European-ised approach.

Reciprocity and exchange fees system have an effect on orgs economies and their regional reality

The issue of reciprocity, raised above in the introduction to the Global/General analysis, is also tied to that of the financial structure of international exchanges, since the entire fee systems is historically based, with very few notable exceptions, on the assumption of balanced exchanges.

The current growth and preference in certain regions for volunteer exchanges that also adopt different financial approaches, such as those usually utilised for group projects (which also create an internal competition and more bilateral dependency compared to the theoretical global interdependence of the IVS network), seem to testify a need to, at least, reassess, if not revolutionise, the international voluntary exchange fee system.

Africa

The African participant organisations in the STEPS project, though showing an interesting sample of the reality of the region (strengths and weaknesses, IVS and not-IVS related), may not be fully representative of the diverse nature and different capacity levels of the organisations in the region.

ADCD, Democratic Republic of Congo: The Congolese CCIVS member is a locally well-rooted organisation developing a powerful work in the field of education and social inclusion in the slums of Kinshasa. The reality is that they seldom have IVS experiences, being focussed in their school and education work.

Volu, Ghana: An IVS organisation who has had an important role in their country during the period of independence, having had an enormous network of people involved, who have afterwards been in key positions in the country and also migrated abroad. The organisation has kept the pride and important infrastructures which would be a good re-starting point for volunteering and capacity building programmes; however, it is going through a period of restructuring and needs to build again team capacities both for management and for project development.

VWAN, Nigeria: This Nigerian organisation has for the last years had some leadership in the African region, being active both at the CCIVS and the SCI level. Not having a strong organisational structure or a considerable sending and hosting capacity brings some challenges to their action.

ASTOVOT, Togo: Another organisation with a long history and relevant weight in their country. The organisation and their projects are respected by their local partners. Their team is young and committed. Though the relevant efforts of its direction to recover a dynamic network of partnerships, the francophone reality has its influence on a low number of sending partners, and low number of hosted volunteers in their camps or LMTV.

UPA, Uganda: The only participant organisation of the Eastern Africa IVS reality, the Ugandan organisation represents well the dynamism (in IVS terms) of that region; with strong regional partnerships, a dynamic national network of local actors, and a stable and well-prepared staff.

Situation in countries affects largely the capacities of organisations

Some contextual situations in the region and each country usually affect the capacity and stability of the orgs in the region: on the one hand the unstable sociopolitical situation (related to conflicts, poverty, ...); on the other hand, language barriers, specially concerning francophone countries, make it more difficult to them to access interregional networking and partnerships (being English nowadays the main language, and the only global, in IVS), as well as regarding intraregional networking: as there is a mixture of French and English “frank” languages in the western countries, it becomes more challenging to strengthen a western-Africa IVS network.

The scarcity of means, as it was put (less circulation of goods, objects, money, ...), while it may be affecting the regular life and development of organisations, and it does affect also the networking and partnerships, responds however to the local realities in the regions; which raises, therefore, an important question on where the problem is pointed: in the existence of less means or in the lack of capacity of the movement to adapt to such obvious reality.

Structure

- > Shared vision, mission, values
- > Strategic Plan
- > Legal
- > Office and facilities
- > Governance

History of organisations may become a burden if there is no capacity to renovate and evolve

Whilst the historic itinerary of organisations is often underlined as one of the top strengths for several African organisations (many African IVS organisations have had a relevant role in their countries for decades), it seems to become sometimes a weight (a burden?), specially when the organisation struggles to survive or to renovate its basis and leading roles. In some cases, it looks like while the organisation relies on what it has been and meant in the past, it lacks capacity to start all over and find the turning point for a renovation. This seems to be closely linked with the generational issue, the difficulties to find and consolidate new generations to take the leadership.

Infrastructural assets as potential leverage for organisational development

One noticed strength in the region is the existence in many cases of assets, infrastructural goods and opportunities (training centers, land, hosting facilities in important cities) which could act as leverage factors for strategic development as organisations, networking in the sub-regions, or regional networks. This, in case the organisations would be interested, should involve a mid or long term strategic plan, supported at the intra-regional or interregional level.

Functioning

- > Team processes: management, staff, activists
- > Internal communication
- > Activities and projects
 - > Incoming
 - > Outgoing
 - > Trainings and others

Beyond hosting, low level of exchanges

The region, in IVS terms, is notably characterised by being a mostly hosting region, with very low outgoing capacity (of course due also to structural issues, like finances and visa policies), and quite limited (though sometimes present) intraregional exchange.

In several cases, organisations have been weakened by different circumstances, which has left them with a very reduced network of functional partnerships/contacts at the sending side (usually northern orgs, as S-S exchange is globally weak); and the international networking sphere.

Capacity building is a challenge: difficult in the country, difficult to participate abroad

When we talk about competences and capacities within the staff and the organisations, it looks that, at least for the most weakened organisations, there is a challenge in consolidating fundamental competences either on management or on IVS functions: training / camp-leading, project management or networking areas. The structural situation in the region (and the *global context regarding the region*) does not facilitate a permanent flow of capacity building activity, or a range of training opportunities within the organisations which is sufficient and regular.

Regarding IVS competences-building, in regions like Europe or Asia, this has been clearly an advantage to have a strong networking dynamism and possibilities to travel and meet among professionals and activists within the region; which is usually very hard to find in the African region.

To some extent, it would look recommendable that organisations would invest strategically in strengthening the African-nonAfrican links, strategic partnerships, as a way to increase the capacities (both in IVS exchange, and in capacity building).

Introducing new IVS formulas?

For organisations who are struggling to maintain the incoming level (which, beyond being a global trend, is related as well to the above-mentioned decreasing number of partnerships), it has been pointed out that it may be an opportunity to open the field to “innovative”, or *not yet tried*, practices, such as: group volunteer projects, family camps, combined activities (training+camp+visit), which are resulting well for other partners in the same or in other regions (Asia, Europe).

Community projects bringing community change

Project-wise, the visits to some of the projects (together with impact assessment with interviews, and also other sources of information) enlighten the fact of the great community projects in the region impulsed by member organisations. The little awareness there is, regionally and globally, about such grassroots projects is a major contradiction. (This is to be addressed in the Communication dimension)

Communication

-
- > Communication approach
 - > Internal communication (visibility)
 - > External communication
 - > Production
 - > Social Networks
 - > Visibility

Existing communication in IVS does not valorise existing community change

As pointed out above, there seems to be a gap/contradiction between the actual existence of great longterm grassroots projects promoted by IVS African organisations, and the level of knowledge about them, specially in other regions. One of the factors pointed seems to be the communication system or model adopted in the IVS sector: which is more based on technical issues linked to organisational features of camps (being these the “commercial requirements”: type of work, accommodation, tasks,...) than on the actual community roots of the projects.

Which are finally neither known by volunteers or sending organisations. Such reality obliges to revisit the consequences of such technified - commercialised communication model for the good networking and vision of the movement; and to explore new dynamics and models of communication of projects between partners.

But what does volunteering mean for every part of the project?

On the other hand, this situation also brings out the need to re-discuss and establish what IVS means to such community projects and to the hosting organisations. It is sometimes not clarified enough in projects, and it is not completely shared in long discussions, to ensure, not necessarily the agreement, but mostly the understanding of all parties.

Relations

- > Local/National
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions
 - > Activists
- > International
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions

A long tradition of cooperation in the region; some dynamic, some struggling

There is a long-term tradition of networking within the region, and subregional networks operate (more formally or less) at the Eastern Africa level (with consolidated traditions of cooperation in projects, such as the 3-country itinerant camps), the Western Africa (where some exchange exists, though with bigger challenges related to language and other circumstances) and Southern African region. This level of cooperation, and an existing shared idea of an African brotherhood, is one of the elements that keep a fluid communication and will to cooperate beyond the somehow challenging difficulties: in terms of lack of resources to organise meetings, events, training activities or exchanges together.

The lack of finances to support African-based interregional projects distorts the dynamics

When such events happen, they are more often at the subregional level; and, when they happen at a Panafrican or cross-african level, most of the times it is helped by the existence of inter-regional projects (mostly EU funded): meaning that they are not organised with autonomy by the African organisations themselves, and on their self-determined priorities alone, but combining them with the priorities of other regions, with a specific selection of partners. Such usually renewed selection of partners for projects, by the way, sometimes does not ensure a sense of continuity of action among African partners (because such partners change from project to project).

Specific funds and increase of networking

The delicate situation in terms of functioning (IVS exchange, capacity building) for the weaker organisations in the region would recommend strategic alliances which may contribute to strengthen them:

- > at the intraregional level, finding a system to increase the intra-regional exchanges and activities; as mentioned, this is more regular in the east than in the west (where language and organisational challenges are to be addressed);
- > at the inter-regional level, it would be interesting to emerge a group of orgs from other regions who are strong in the outgoing/capacity building areas and could contribute to impulse a bi- or multilateral strategy of IVS exchange and capacity building activity with African orgs who need that. Such strategic alliance could mobilise cooperation, capacity building and volunteers exchange, and in the mid term be a catalyser to widen the network of partnerships for organisations who are seeing their network and capacity reduced.

An issue discussed during the process of assessment, is the case of several organisations in the region which at a certain moment have had to leave the CCIVS because of their lack of capacity to follow some basic requirements of the network. For such cases it has been noted that these organisations have missed a more active support from the network, on the one hand; on the other hand, it has also been defended that the membership in a network requires also minimum action or expression of interest (communication, IVS activity, payment of fees,...), which in those cases failed to happen for considerable periods of time.

Financial sustainability



Dependency on one source: hosting volunteers

Usually public institutions in the region do not support financially organisations or projects, and there is not much support from the local private sector either. This main factor (but also some other) usually results on a generalised financial dependency to the practise of hosting volunteers.

When we take into consideration the formerly mentioned structural factors (socio-economic-political-organisational instability due to many reasons) of the orgs in the region, such dependency is an extra challenge.

Existing assets as leverage for organisational development

The already identified existence of infrastructural assets (training centers, hosting facilities,...) could be used as starting points, as leverage factors to develop long-term financial strategies. In this direction, the experience to work on this topic during the STEP trainings, revealed the interest for organisations to undergo such kind of financial training, so that they may be able to plan their own financial development based on their specific strengths and potentialities.

America

The STEPs experience in America was shared with 5 Latin American organisations, who are mostly focussed in MLTV rather than in short term/ workcamps, and involved or close to the ICYE network. This brought many rich elements and also diversity from other regional STEPs.

Subir al Sur, Argentina: After a period of re-definition of their IVS work, which prioritised mid and long term volunteering to workcamps (which stopped) and projects in the Buenos Aires district (rather than the whole country), in order to have a good follow-up and management of the projects, now Subir al Sur, which has always been a dynamic and proactive organisation, is willing to develop new areas or strategies within IVS (outgoing, local workcamps, etc.) . Having integrated into Fundación SES, they make part of a very interesting social initiative, from which they also have the need to define their own identity.

ACI, Costa Rica: Being the Costa Rican member of ICYE, ACI is also an organisation which is open to innovation and to developing different experiences of networking and IVS: they host workcamps, and send short-term volunteers, participates in Alliance and CCIVS meetings, etc. The team is quite well prepared, professionalised.

Chiriboga, Ecuador: The Ecuadorian partner of the project have a solid community work, which has had over the years a strong accent of environmental work, but also develop social projects at schools and etc. Its structure is quite familiar, family based, which gives the organisation quite a craftwork personality, and also sometimes limitations in their capacities. Their process to include new leaderships in the organisation is being quite successful.

SIIJUVE, Mexico: The Mexican member of ICYE has a developed network in several regions in the country, and a well-established functioning, a prepared team, and local groups of volunteers, which facilitates the technical work and the exchange of volunteers. As it is usual for ICYE members, Siijuve focusses in long-term volunteering, and works with good quality standards.

BVBP, Peru: The Bolivarianos in Peru have been an historical youth organisation in the country, influential and with a great impact in the youth empowerment. Their powerful work at the national level has made them a reference for several years among the American IVS organisations. In the recent years, they have needed to re-organise due to changes in their international structure of partnerships, and a challenging period of renovation of leaderships.

If we draw a very general context of the region, we can recall that some organisations claimed their national sociopolitical realities as a challenge for them (instability, violence), while some underlined their national context as a big part of their success (touristic and environmental attractive). Volunteering, at least in the form of IVS, is not a mainstream rooted concept in America; social commitment takes other forms, and organisations are striving to find narratives to position their proposals at the local or regional level.

Structure

- > Shared vision, mission, values
- > Strategic Plan
- > Legal
- > Office and facilities
- > Governance

Organisations in transition, need collective process of strategic planning

Many of the visited organisations are in a process of transition or restructuring, either because of an intergenerational change of leadership, or because of other strategic moments. This may not be specific to organisations in this region -but to the fact of being an organisation (where changes are so permanent), and furthermore an org within the IVS field (often with such a high staff turnover, low income, etc.).

In such situations of renovation, we have found it relevant to put the accent in process of collective planning, shared strategic work to foster internal dialogue, collaborative construction, and the empowerment of new people with leadership capacities who may renovate or complement the already existing leadership in the organisation. It is in such processes where organisations can be strengthened, by building collective visions, incorporating capacities and human resources (who are motivated by feeling they contributed to the future plan of the organisation) which may allow the organisation to go forwards.

This would look specifically important for several organisations which struggle to articulate good inter-generational takeover processes.

Organisations with strengths in structure may lead a regional development

Some organisations have a consolidated structure behind them, either in terms of “a big organisation” supporting (as it could be somehow the case for SAS), or with a consolidated role in an international network (as it could be the case for Siijuve). This is an asset not only for the strategic development of the organisations themselves, but also for the region , in terms of supporting IVS regional networking/mutual support/development.

Functioning

- > Team processes: management, staff, activists
- > Internal communication
- > Activities and projects
 - > Incoming
 - > Outgoing
 - > Trainings and others

More focussed on long-term volunteering

One of the elements that characterises the IVS practice in the region is that in most organisations the focus is more into long term volunteering, than into short-term activities (workcamps).

As well, for the STEPS experience, it is to be remarked that the project partners in America were mostly members of the ICYE network (or close to it), so the structuring of their IVS management and concept is quite defined by ICYE's standards and approach.

Shared priority to develop the sending of volunteers

A common self-acknowledged need/will of American organisations was to strengthen (or in fact, to launch) the sending of volunteers, with a double objective: to balance the exchange (reciprocity as a fundamental element of IVS); and to strengthen the financial capacity and structure of the organisation.

If an outgoing area is to be structured-consolidated in these organisations (which would be something quite new for them, and therefore there is a lack of internal culture on that; and there is not a local culture widespread in these countries about volunteering abroad), there is a need of capacity building, training for future outgoing officers; and also the need to develop specific strategies in each organisation to develop such area. For such aim, it would be fundamental to count on the support of networks and strategic partners.

Language is often a barrier

Not in all cases, but English speaking is not so widespread, so usually it is harder to find staff/ volunteers who are willing/daring/being able to participate and benefit from existing programmes. This makes it even more needed, on the other hand, to reinforce the regional networking, as language is not such a barrier within the region.

The competences exist in the region

Several of the priorities which are considered most needed in the region are present in some of the regional IVS actors (for example: SES-SAS is strong in strategic planning ; Vive Mexico is strong in outgoing; ICYE or ACI are strong in the whole placement and hosting system).

A main element is how to mobilise such strengths (funds and networking dynamics) so that there can be a real system of mutual support and regional development.

Communication

- > Communication approach
- > Internal communication (visibility)
- > External communication
 - > Production
 - > Social Networks
 - > Visibility

Need to build the narrative of volunteering

As stated, in the regional context part, in a region where the IVS concept of volunteering is not at all mainstreamed or popular, the need of building a narrative, a concept that explains in the local codes the positive changes that volunteering means, seems especially important. For several aims: for awareness raising and fostering participation, of course; but also for promoting the IVS with the intention of sending volunteers; and to strengthen institutional relations with local/national/regional institutions.

Lack of resources dedicated to communication

An organisational challenge related to the issue of communication is quite common to little organisations all over the world: there are no people/resources assigned to communication. This dimension is usually considered one of the weakest areas (at least for the case of STEPS partners, with the exception of one of the partner organisations, which does have a specialised professional in the field of communication).

Besides the fact that some work is being done on social networks, there is no strategic approach or plan to external communication, and therefore no structured transformative actions or contents. For such a strategic need, to build a narrative, and to generate the conditions to start sending volunteers, it is recommendable to allocate time to create a communication plan which focusses in such priorities.

Strategic processes to clarify the direction and the meaning of the organisation

With regards to internal communication, it has been stated already that strategic planning processes (or this diagnostic processes with the pentagon) are very much needed in order to increase the sense of belonging, the achievement of competences and the alignment of members within the organisation. Such processes are also internal communication processes, which allow the organisation to be better connected and united.

We have also observed that among the staff or activists of some organisations, there was also some lack of clarity on what IVS is, aims, and what is its impact; so therefore, the development of such narrative internally is also going to strengthen the organisation and its teams.

Relations

-
- > Local/National
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions
 - > Activists
 - > International
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions

Given the fact that, in the American context (with the exceptions of some Mexican and US organisations, not partners of STEPS), we refer to organisations which, on IVS terms, basically host volunteers in local projects, they have consolidated their network of relationships with local partners.

Relations and partnerships with private sector at local level

As well, the context were Latin-American organisations are (usually with little support from public institutions, and scarce public resources), invites to local collaboration with the private sector and to entrepreneurial approaches. This sometimes leads to ongoing debates on the nature of such partnerships, debates which are related to the vision as organisations; but keeping the fact of the need of having such debates, each organisation needs to address their own approach to encompass their values and such partnerships with the private sector.

Searching for the network of reference and understanding networks themselves

Regarding the international field, some organisations are still trying to orientate themselves and define their own international strategic position, their role and network of reference. As stated above, those organisations belonging to ICYE have a clearer reference, as this network has very clear procedures and sets clearly the flow of volunteers and its main features, making it as well compulsory to participate in international events. But for those who are not in ICYE, or don't want to remain an only-ICYE member, it is not so clear and easy to participate in other networks. Sometimes by not participating in global events, organisations start lacking the main understanding of IVS networking, and the trust dynamics among partners that make the IVS successful.

It is here more interesting even to support the strategic bilateral/trilateral partnerships, to guide organisations into the networking dynamics.

A regional network or at least fluent regional networking dynamics

Having this issue been a major concern, with several initiatives promoted at least in the last 2 decades, to foster and support vibrating network experiences within the region (both for the own interest of IVS organisations in the region -to gain strength, balance, cooperation, and mutual support-, and also for other regions -to consolidate good

partnerships in the region), none of them has clearly flourished. The level of interest remains intact on both sides (America, and interregional partners); and therefore, attempts or proposals are to be supported.

The predisposition of a (or a group of) strong organisation in the region to contribute to such energisation could be a strong catalyser for that (it seems that there is the capacity and interest by some, for example Fundacion SES-Subir Al Sur).

A youth group to promote American cooperation and strengthen new partnerships-leaderships

As well, during the STEPS an opportunity was identified to launch/support a process among the young members/ potential leaders at the different American IVS organisations, with activities and exchanges planned by them. Such dynamics could lead to work on common priorities for the region, and potentially to a plan of action “from below” for the upcoming years, which could stimulate networking relations within the region. Besides strengthening the youth leaderships in the region, and therefore help in the renovation challenges.

Financial sustainability



Dependency of incoming volunteers

All organisations point at this dimension as one of the weakest; however there is diversity regarding their financial structure. The common element is that in most organisations, the income structure is almost exclusively dependant on the arrival of incoming volunteers; no grants or funds, and particularly neither income generated from outgoing volunteers. Such dependency is probably the element of highest financial vulnerability.

That is why, the element of developing the outgoing volunteers area in these organisations, besides feeding the reciprocity issue, would be a logic way of balancing the economy of American organisations.

Working on financial literacy and long-term development plans

On the other hand, it would look as an interesting approach to work on “financial literacy” within the teams, as well as on the strategic financial development plans.

These have been points tackled during the STEPs experiences, and the results, the level of interest raised, and the acknowledgement of a new awareness on how to take the organisation forwards, make it very recommendable to promote such kind of capacity building in the region.

This last element could be strategic, considering the existence of infrastructures or other leverage points in every organisation which could sustain the possibilities for financial take-offs.

Asia

The Asian region is so wide and diverse that it includes several huge subregions (“there are many Asia”, it was said in the group of representatives: East, South-East, South, Central, etc.), and also a quite clear distinction between “northern” and “southern” Asia (“there are two Asia”, others had said before).

The fact that Asia as a region includes quite clearly separated global norths and souths within (socioeconomically speaking) has its effect on the IVS working system in the region: predominantly sending (northern) vs. mostly hosting (southern) organisations have developed in the region; and as a consequence quite usually more personal development-oriented vs. community development-focused organisations.

All in all, when it comes to participant organisations in the STEP experience, we talk about quite strong organisations, either in the sending or the hosting side, which have very strong relations with stakeholders to support their main area of specialisation.

CYA, Cambodia: The youngest Asian organisation in the project, it has since its founding in 2010 a strong focus on hosting international projects in the country, with Cambodian youth always serving and training alongside foreign volunteers both for short-term and long-term programs. Having rapidly achieved a stability in its management and programs, it has recently been very involved in the regional and global IVS leadership.

SCI-HK: Born in 2006 as one of the newest groups in SCI, the organisation has been deeply revitalising the historic presence of the network in Asia, in particular through a large network of young volunteers and active members, and partnerships with schools and universities that allowed for a quick growth of short-term and bilateral exchanges, with an important role being played by group projects.

RUCHI, India: An integrated and participatory rural development organisation active since the early 1980s, it focusses mostly on local projects in the North of India, where short and long term volunteers serve in the framework of larger, more technical projects, bridging them with the socio-cultural aspects promoted by the international networks the organisation is part of, both in Asia (NVDA) and internationally (CCIVS).

IWO/Better World, Korea: Having developed very rapidly since its establishment in 1999, the organisation promotes global education and development, linking the personal growth of Korean youth with the challenges of local communities in the country and around the world. In addition to a strong sending program, the organisation has become a leader in the region and beyond especially for its capacity of developing alternative and innovative forms of IVS, including through CSR partnerships.

VSA, Thailand: Active predominantly in the south of the country, the organisation relies on a very strong network of national partners developed since its first international workcamp in 2009; this ensures a continuity of service in the communities where volunteer projects are hosted, with a strong emphasis and investment of human resources being put on the on-arrival training of the volunteers and on the regular monitoring of the projects. Thanks to the institutional partnerships in place, the organisation also presents an important potential in terms of access to training resources and infrastructures that could reveal beneficial for the whole region.

These are mostly organisations around the NVDA network spectrum, and therefore quite young, dynamic, empowered. Discussions during the process highlight also another reality, which is that of the historical SCI organisations, with a very long history in the movement, and with a rather different dynamic and range of challenges than the orgs that participated in STEPS and belong to NVDA.

Structure

- > Shared vision, mission, values
- > Strategic Plan
- > Legal
- > Office and facilities
- > Governance

A dynamic force for the IVS system

The Asian region has witnessed the appearance and fast consolidation of several IVS organisations in the last 1 or 2 decades, as well as the establishment of the regional network NVDA. While in the beginning this happened with external support, the region took over soon with dynamism and internal support, and acts as a real space of reference for its members in the region.

Hierarchical governance also brings challenges on handing over leadership and assumption of responsibilities

One main aspect to notice at the governance level is the traditionally quite hierarchical organisations, which very often respond, on the one hand, to cultural factors, and also to the remaining leadership of the founder(s) of the organisation. Whilst this does not manifest as conflictual in the assumption of power structures among the organisation members, it appears to be challenging when it comes to being able to ensure the takeover of responsibilities and leadership when it is necessary. (That does not appear to be an urgent issue in the NVDA-like organisations, but apparently has become a major issue in several Asian SCI branches).

Such framework of understanding the leadership in the organisations seems to be also reflected in situations where staff is not willing to assume responsibilities within the team when vacancies are open. Proposals on this area coming from Asian members point at the possibility to offer training on leadership skills, to introduce staff to volunteering, giving opportunities to join projects in order to increase the sense of leadership, ownership and belonging within the organisation.

Functioning

- > Team processes: management, staff, activists
- > Internal communication
- > Activities and projects
 - > Incoming
 - > Outgoing
 - > Trainings and others

More hosting-oriented and more-sending oriented organisations

As mentioned, in the region there are quite purely sending and quite purely hosting organisations.

Southern organisations focussed mostly on the community projects where they host volunteers; and northern organisations have an important focus on the sending of volunteers, despite they all have local projects in their countries.

Innovation and new forms of volunteering arise

Dynamism in the organisations and the teams lead to develop innovative approaches to communication, and to networking and social relations. Volunteering with CSR projects are taking place in some countries, and they guarantee the performance of community projects, and a regular number of projects in the mid-long term.

As a trend, group volunteers projects are increasing and they take as much space as regular workcamps. As a result, the mix between workcamps and group volunteering consolidates a trend towards short-term projects.

**Seeking alternatives to the decrease in volunteering:
group volunteering and other practices**

Such reality is coexisting with the (global) trend of decreasing number of volunteers; and sometimes (for those organisations who work with this modality) group volunteering is compensating the decreasing numbers of “traditional IVS”, with this “new” kind of participants.

In any case, such trend of decreasing number of volunteers, lead organisations to find solutions and alternatives, and this has sometimes opened a breach, to consider and accept in some specific cases to cooperate with models that could potentially represent a threat for the movement.

Communication

- > Communication approach
- > Internal communication (visibility)
- > External communication
 - > Production
 - > Social Networks
 - > Visibility

A strength in several organisations: an inspiration for other regions?

Regarding public or external communication, several organisations in the region, mostly at the sending side, are managing to make a dynamic use of social media and institutional relations in order to attract potential volunteers.

In fact, the Asian region is the only one where communication arises as one of the main strengths (or higher rated in the self-diagnosis), so here there would be chances that Asian organisation show a way to other regions of how they deal with this issue.

Especially on what regards to the orientation towards communication, the use of social media, events and PR, etc. However, neither here the question of the building of a new narrative around IVS has been developing.

Internal communication: structures influence the communication flows

The above mentioned structural system (usually long-lasting leaderships, vertical relations) has shown sometimes consequences as challenges on internal communication, not being very fluid the flow of information and communication along the organisation.

Relations

- > Local/National
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions
 - > Activists
- > International
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions

Rich and diversified networking both for hosting and sending

The national networks of relations among Asian organisations are notably rich and varied, both for mostly-hosting and mostly-sending organisations.

Public institutions, private companies, universities, etc. Cooperate widely and provide different opportunities for projects, volunteers, with varied sponsorships and

partnerships. Sometimes companies are sponsoring outgoing volunteers, sometimes hosting projects; sometimes, universities in hosting and sending countries make partnerships and support project development at both sides.

NVDA as a reference network in the region

On the international relations side, the NVDA network is playing a very dynamic role of ensuring communication among members, and support to newcomer organisations. The network acts as a real space for decision and reflection making for the Asian organisations, and therefore it acts well as a reference actor for the region. This may have been a success factor in the fast and stable development for organisations in the region.

SCI has played a major role in IVS (and social changes movements), with a very long history in the region. However, it appears that in the last years, several of the main SCI branches have been going through some challenges and appear to be less prominent.

The role of NVDA in the global scene

There are frequent relations between CCIVS and NVDA (on the one hand, many organisations are members of both networks -including EC members-; on the other hand, thanks to meetings like the Global meeting or other international meetings, which allow a regular flow of communication), and the proposal by CCIVS to NVDA to become a member of the global network, opens questions and challenges, mainly on which would be the role of NVDA within. While leaving the question of membership open, aside, the reflection on the role of NVDA for the movement as a whole has brought suggestions as that it could act as a leading actor for CCIVS programmes in the region: co-leading projects like STEPS in Asia, for example.

Financial sustainability



A budget structure mostly leaning on an only field of income

The described dynamism in networking and in hosting and sending volunteers, provide a basis for economic stability and professionalised structures.

Whilst organisations are quite relying in a single field of income (either on outgoing or incoming volunteers) -which would imply a risk when the capacity of sending or hosting could decrease-, they have quite a diversified source of income for such activity -which makes them less dependent on one kind of donor or income generating actor.

Exchange of good practices on income generation activities

Since some years, members in Asia have pointed out the interest on promoting the exchange of good practices on income generation activities (both at community development projects, for the community; and also at the organisation, to sustain the organisation).

Such exchange, as it is not usually at the center of IVS conversations, is not produced, and on the contrary, may be instrumental to enrich the economic strategies in IVS organisations and community projects.

Training and support to achieve new funds in Asia for interregional cooperation or local development

Being Asia a region both with “northern” economies and “southern challenges” and realities, there are existing funds which may be willing to contribute to interregional cooperation and to community development according to IVS methodology. It would be capital for breaking the unicity of European funds and the consequences described in other parts of the document.

In the late years, this issue has been on the table, but it has not been possible yet to define the correct strategy or action; therefore it may be strategic to plan some training on this issue to IVS professionals who may proceed with such mission in the region.

Europe

An external point of view was missing for Europe

As we look at the diagnosis process of the STEPS project, there is a methodological observation to be pointed out regarding the European region: that in all regions visited, but in Europe, there was an “outsider” point of view, which would contribute to the depth of the analysis with the capacity to observe differences. In Europe, on the contrary, experts were from the region, and there would not be (due to last minute organisational issues) a visiting network from a different region at the training. This may have resulted, as a consequence, in a poorer analysis of its particular features as a region.

A very high rhythm of international projects going on

The second remark in relation to the project as a process, is that the field visits have been somehow less successful, as partners may have considered this opportunity less relevant or outstanding in the middle of an intense rhythm of international activities. While we detected that hosts from other regions also had difficulties to understand the main aim of the field visit activities, they would devote to take the best of them, and experienced it as a very relevant learning process; while for the European experience such predisposition was lower. As a counterbalance, participants to the training had a good level of competences, somehow higher than in other regions, and this allowed to work deeper into the contents of the organisational development training.

Stabilised and professionalised organisations

Organisational-wise, the general observation is that IVS organisations are usually stronger (than IVS on other regions), more consolidated financially and with members-staff with higher levels of training and opportunities for professional learning/networking at the (local and) international level. However this is not of course absolute, and stands mainly for organisations which professionalised and grew around the existing funds and supports which exist in the region (while some other organisations which have wanted to keep a more volunteer-based structure still struggle for ensuring their survival).

The consolidation of organisations (not only within the IVS, but more generally as NGOs in the region) generate a shift of the basic priorities, compared to other regions, towards more quality than survival issues: so when they self-diagnose, they point their own weaknesses in terms of quality standards, their own transformation or functioning goals, than in terms of pure stability.

SCI, Catalunya: The Catalan branch of SCI is nowadays both a balanced and dynamic organisation, led by young activists committed to the implementation of the vision of the organisation, which both involved in the social grassroots activism at the local level, and in the international SCI movement. The leadership puts the focus on the the social basis and the internal democracy of the organisation. Their challenges are on the connection between their local activism with social movements and the international and IVS action, which is sometimes less connected to these themes, and it somehow needs to strengthen the connections.

Solidarités Jeunesses, France: This is a consolidated French organisation which has taken quite of a leadership within the movement (strategic projects like impact research; or the presidency of CCIVS for several mandates), and has also an interesting network at the national-local level, with capacities at the technical side and training side.

Concordia, France: One of the longest paths in IVS, Concordia is very much recognised and established in France; with a consolidated tradition of international

workcamps and volunteering work. Its structure with regional offices all over France make the national coordination one of its main challenges, together with the external ones of the decrease of funds for workcamps, youth work and the decrease of volunteers. Concordia has a developed network of professionals, of technical leaders, a competent permanent group of trainers, and an interesting and diverse social basis around the organisation.

SCI Hellas, Greece: The Greek branch of SCI has been active for several years, managing IVS as well as European projects. With interesting local partnerships, focussed on migrations and refugees, their main aim at the moment is to strengthen the social basis locally.

Egyesek, Hungary: Egyesek is small but very well established organisation which counts with a well-organised and skilled team, a very good international reputation based on their reliability and quality as partners, and on their dynamism and capacity to offer their competences and infrastructures for projects. The team believes in the project, and the leadership works very much oriented towards quality and the offer of opportunities for young people towards personal development. The main area for development for an external observer would be the long-term strategy: both to generate an orientation of where the organisation is aiming and evaluate accordingly, and to increase internal dynamics among the social basis.

Structure

- > Shared vision, mission, values
- > Strategic Plan
- > Legal
- > Office and facilities
- > Governance

Focus on increasing the internal participation, involvement in the organisations

Main focusses relative to challenges in structure concern the strategic planning and its correlative effects in collective construction of the organisations, widening of social basis, and democratisation of leadership, empowerment of activists.

Is professionalisation the only way?

The above-mentioned reality of some organisations who are struggling for their subsistence, underline questions around how to ensure the sustainability of models of participation, organisational models, which are not the professionalised ones which the "institutionalisation" that the EU values-resources influenced. Looking at it from a wider perspective (regional, inter-regional) this opens the question on how to monitor and support this kind of organisations outside the "usual" trend.

Functioning

- > Team processes:
management, staff, activists
- > Internal communication
- > Activities and projects
 - > Incoming
 - > Outgoing
 - > Trainings and others

Decrease in volunteers affects deeply the region; and as a consequence, the whole system

European organisations have represented historically the most volume of IVS exchange, both on the sending and the hosting, and therefore the global trend towards decrease of hosting and sending volunteers, is both very rooted in Europe (less funding to local camps, hosting projects not filled, less European volunteers applying to participate), and affects importantly the existence and practice of European organisations.

Systems and procedures of placement and exchange are an asset

Quite usually, the placement functions are professionalised and, despite a high turnover, procedures are established and exchanges work smoothly and reliably from the technical point of view.

Regular international meetings (like the Technical Meetings, evaluation meetings and general assemblies) help a good level of communication and cooperation among members, strengthen the capacities of staff, and mobilise the movement not only for Europe, but also for other regions (members from other regions participate in such events, and enter into cooperation, learning and improvement processes by joining networking meetings).

From this very well rooted staff learning practices, and consolidated systems, European organisations could provide support (with strategic partnerships that are also beneficial to them) to organisations in other regions that are striving to organise an outgoing area in their organisations.

Communication

- > Communication approach
- > Internal communication
(visibility)
- > External communication
 - > Production
 - > Social Networks
 - > Visibility

Concern for a communication that attracts volunteers and brings recognition

The issues regarding communication are linked to the capacity to mobilise people, volunteers, activists towards activities; and to bring visibility and recognition to the work done.

The existing recognition (weaker or stronger depending on the country/organisation) is not enough in general as to be considered among the relevant actors of social change within the country/society.

Stories of IVS, new narratives, impact research for renewed communication approaches

Some initiatives are being launched aiming to give form to the “stories” that should be explained in order to give visibility to who we are and the impact of IVS. It has been

suggested that such stories need to come out from the interviews implemented for the impact research with communities.

These stories, should be woven along a long term strategy of communication, with a community approach: not privileging the instant charm, the marketing approach, but the development of relationships with specific communities, whom may become involved in the end, and in a long-term perspective, with IVS experiences.

Relations

- > Local/National
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions
 - > Activists
- > International
 - > NGOs and CSO
 - > Institutions

Consolidated and strong intra-regional and inter-regional networking

There is a dense fabric of networks both at the European and the national level, where organisations are usually positioned, within and outside the IVS field.

There is an intense exchange of participants/volunteers and projects, a constant cooperative work, involving working groups, sub-networks, thematic actions, etc. As mentioned, this is relevant and positive for professional exchange and learning, and also to initiate and sustain thematic initiatives (human rights and peace, sustainability and climate change, social inclusion, trainings).

So autonomous that the region is not influenced by other regions needs and dynamics?

But it also produces two less positive effects: a self-referring, self-contained activity and sustainability, which makes the region less easily influenced by the situations and concerns of other regions.

Too much diversity for other regions to have a clear reference?

Other regions have suggested that the existence of such diverse prominent networking actors (Alliance, SCI, ICYE) in Europe makes it complicated to have a clear reference for the region: both technically (could there be agreed positions, protocols and guidelines of how Europeans want projects-partnerships to work?) and politically (could European networks agree on specific positions or open a space for coordination and reference, so that it is clearer when it comes to interact with “Europe” for the other regions?)

Financial sustainability

- > Financial management
- > Financial skills and processes
- > Income:
 - diversification, grants,
 - own income
- > Expenses

More availability of funds, more stability and “power”

Despite the recent economic crisis in Europe, the situation in the region has been defined as of a “financial privilege”: with the existence of quite abundant public funding, not only national, but also (or mainly sometimes) regional (EU, E+ funds), but also sustained by a higher individual financial capacity to travel and participate in projects, especially when they are co-financed by public funds and initiatives. Such privilege

makes also Europe quite of a center of power in the context of international volunteering.

(Not meaning that this power is misused, or utilised to control or impose in any cases, as the feeling in the movement is to drive horizontally; but that this needs to be observed, counterbalanced if possible with other capacities at other regions, and stimulated to make it the most shared possible).

Regarding the individual organisations, the line of survival is often secured by such existence of funds, however this depends on the model of organisation chosen, professionalisation, etc.

Strategy

A Strategic approach to a long-term Empowerment and Monitoring programme

The systematic diagnosis shared above provides an orientation to structure a proposal for a long-term training programme for the movement, or more widely, a long-term Empowerment and Monitoring programme. It identifies not only priority thematics, but also key actors, and regional and global dynamics to be addressed.

	Global	Africa	America	Asia	Europe
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Leadership building and transition processes in the organisations. Processes of power delegation, hand-over, share. - Proposal of a permanent offer or modules on this issue at CCIVS and/or the networks to support this processes. - Intercultural and interregional diverse teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Existing infrastructures to support the launching of Competence Centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Leadership and organisational transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Leadership and organisational transitions > Strategic planning - American orgs can lead and support a capacity building process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Leadership and organisational transitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Leadership and organisational transitions > Strategic planning - Existing European staff with competences to train, but interesting to build intercultural teams and exchanges.
Functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Long-term empowerment programmes which are permanent and cross-cutting to the whole chain of actors of IVS. - Set up permanent programmes - Regional programmes - Strategic partnerships creating synergies with (and filling gaps of) global programme - Coordinated programmes to take advantage of interregional presence > Standards need revision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Global, regional and strategic partnerships to increase organisational competences and IVS procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Support, peer training, job shadowing, on to support development of an outgoing area. > Existing capacities in the region to support the development of competences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Support and exchange on hosting-sending (as it was done for pioneering organisations, now for those which struggle). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Use the knowledge capital on IVS exchange, and the supporting events (technical meetings, ...) to strategically include partners with a mid-long term action.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Impact and Communication: building new narratives of community change of IVS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Impact and Communication: building new narratives of community change of IVS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Communication strategies, plan and approach > Impact and Communication: building new narratives of community change of IVS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Asian partners can be providing expertise on communication > Impact and Communication: building new narratives of community change of IVS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Impact and Communication: building new narratives of community change of IVS
Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Buddy systems and Staff exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Sustained presence for partners in international networking fora. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Support to regional networking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - youth leadership initiatives - an agreed plan and supported execution of regional activities and trainings - strategic partnerships for staff exchange and training 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Is it possible to articulate a <i>regional narrative</i> which is useful for other regions?
Financial and economic Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Financial literacy (analysing budgets, planning the economy) > Long-term financial strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Long-term financial strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Financial literacy (analysing budgets, planning the economy) > Long-term financial strategies. > Raising American funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Fundraising and raising Asian funds (or available funds for Asia) > Peer training on Income generation initiatives 	

Based on this global and regional approach, a structured programme is to be launched, which incorporates:

The aim

To strengthen the IVS movement and its organisations through a coordinated and agreed dynamic of mutual support and capacity building.

Strategic objectives

To be achieved in the first period of implementation, and also a forecast of possible achievable goals in a longer-term future.

These strategic objectives need further work, as they need to incorporate all networks, so next network meetings will be instrumental for consolidating them, based on what is proposed above and here.

- > A consolidated narrative on IVS impact and community change which works well globally and regionally. (And is adopted by IVS networks and organisations)
- > A global dynamic network around competence centers and training programmes which provides IVS organisations with the capacity building spaces necessary for their priorities, and the networking spaces for regional initiatives to be developed.
- > A decentralised dynamic of peer support, staff exchange and competence development which is based on strategic partnerships, inter-regional and intra-regional cooperation, and follows agreed goals for the mid and long-term.
- > A systematic follow-up system that allows to follow up at the regions and globally, gradually including more and more members.
- > Training capital: An increasing team of skilled trainers who respond to the actual training needs of the movement; an improved set of training materials to be used by organisations worldwide.

A time frame: 2019-2021 (suggested first period)

The following draft schedule is to be discussed and adopted in diverse network fora.

2019	2020	2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Final agreements and Launching of the long-term programme. > Setting of the cross-networks, interregional monitoring team. > First initiatives. STEPS 2 as already an initiation of the programme; regional and interregional pilot strategic initiatives > Training and launching the first interregional team of trainers on organisational development. > Launching of first pilot Competence Centers > Design of long-term projects based on assets (infrastructures) towards training and competence development. > Funds raised with new partners. > Centralised and decentralised trainings responding to the agreed priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Consolidation and systematisation of strategic partnerships towards competence building > Regional trainings by regional and/or interregional teams according to established training priorities. > Implementation of long-term projects and permanent evaluation with the monitoring team. > Evaluation and exchange of practices by the pilot Competence Centers experiences. > Re-orientation of the project according to strategic evaluation. > Design of resulting long-term orientations > Longer-term funds raised to consolidate the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Consolidation of the 2020 projects and dynamics > Second phase of Competence Centers. > Launching of the new projects according to the new submissions and the strategic re-evaluation. > Presentation of results according to strategic objectives and design of the new strategic phase.

A database

of member resources and member needs: this database exists for the participating organisations in the project; but needs to be completed with all those members who are willing to contribute and make part of the programme.

A global approach and an approach per region:

As it is already provided above, there needs to be regional and inter-regional sub-strategies, coordinated globally and regionally.

Teams

A coordinating team needs to evolve towards a more diversified system of follow-up and implementation, which develops in a Monitoring Team (global, inter-network); regional focal points; interregional and regional training teams/pool of trainers; and a permanent contact with strategic initiatives (as decentralised strategic partnerships; competence centers).

Complementary chapters

**A critical look into IVS in
order to address
challenges towards our
vision**

A process of critical analysis of the IVS system:

What are the key aspects to assess in order to bring our vision into this world, and avoid reproducing or strengthening world dynamics of inequality and oppression?

IVS is a system clearly formed by people, communities and organisations who share a vision to bring about change and social transformation towards a more peaceful, sustainable and diverse world. Through the impact research we have identified elements that prove that we are an actor of positive change.

However, interviews and analysis, and the whole process of the STEPS project, have pointed out aspects to which we should pay special attention. As people very simply say: hell is full of good intentions, and it is not the good will that alone brings positive change, but the right practice with the right vision, and the right relationships between everyone involved.

Therefore, it has been considered relevant to look at the IVS system with the lenses of critical analysis, in order to identify elements in the system that should be re-thought, changed in time or prioritised, so that we are aware, first, of where we are heading; and second, that we are heading towards our vision, and not towards the strengthening of a world of inequalities and oppression.

For such revision, a series of discussions were held during the final seminar of the STEPS project, in Holloko, Hungary, and in this document you will find some of the most relevant elements discussed.

Aspects to question, on dominant mindsets and unequal relations

Governance structures and cultural/ organisational models (unique/ideal model)

> Do our ways of making decisions, of gathering in networks or organisations ensure the equal participation of all? (in all their diversity: gender, social and class groups, south- north, local-national, ethnicities,...)

> Is our seek for an ideal model of IVS or exchange bringing up challenges to a diversity of ruling the projects by each organisation, each local association or community project?

Solutions, suggestions and proposals

For this aspect, it is **necessary to dedicate** (locally and globally) **spaces to question the own system**: awareness raising, specific seminars or trainings to deconstruct dominant models, exchange of good practices, awareness raising.

Adopting the approach of **Intersectionality** (one aspect of domination is usually crossed by the other dimensions of inequality, and solutions for one aspect cross with solutions in the other). Though impulsed within the feminist movement – not only patriarchy also social, geopolitical context, and governance aspects etc., this is an approach which is widespread and allows to make critical systematic analysis; and also to strengthen the fights or processes towards equality.

Aspects to question, on dominant mindsets and unequal relations

Solutions, suggestions and proposals

Who is visible when we promote?

Do sending organisations make visible the hosting communities and associations in charge of the projects and the incoming organisations which facilitate the volunteer exchange?

Do national organisations valorise and make visible the local associations who promote the projects locally and are actors at the grassroots level within their communities?

Then are we horizontal (and fair) with our narrative, do we promote a real culture of collaboration?

Who is trained and empowered?

On the same line as with visibility, when an organisation (usually in capital or big cities) gets access to networking opportunities, to training opportunities, to decision-making processes: do their local partners, do the members of communities have also access to them, as part of the "chain" of stakeholders?

And beyond the argument of the different interests of local stakeholders, do the networks and national organisations plan capacity building and networking plans which are of the interest of local hosts?

A dominant model of volunteering?

When we promote our model of international volunteering, are we valorising at the same time the traditional ways of volunteering of the community? And therefore do we ensure that our model partners with traditional models and strengthens them (and IVS is strengthened by them)?

On the other hand, with the same lens or perspective, it may seem that at the international level, it looks like IVS is dominated by other models that have more visibility or are in power, and sometimes do not recognise IVS.

Name – InterNATIONAL – (nation state)

The name of the network Coordination Committee of InterNATIONAL Voluntary Service, as well as of the tool InterNATIONAL Voluntary Service, clearly comes of a way or structuring power and cultural production, which is the dominant nowadays in geopolitics; and of course is a cultural construction of distribution of power, which is not natural but dominant nowadays. Therefore we should not take it for granted and analyse if the model we want to promote on local-geographic politics is that of the nation-state or we do not necessarily have to align with that model and think and promote other ways of thinking our cooperation and geographical relations.

Promoting narratives and stories that valorise and put in the center the hosting associations and hosting communities.

Using the material that comes out of the interviews for impact research with communities, allows to focus on local realities and valorise the actors at the community level.

Inviting stakeholders at meetings, and promote their own voice and value.

Multi-stakeholder approach.

A system that (conceptualises well, deepens and) puts into practice a collective building of projects and cooperation; which ensures a plural satisfaction of interests and the empowerment of all levels of partnership-stakeholders.

Organise more events with mix of partners; and events related to the interests of host and partner organisations.

Recognition of others systems (community, minga,...), learning from them and studying at the local level how these systems work, ensuring that our model can reinforce and complement the traditional ways of community involvement and volunteering.

Questioning (as proposal on intersectionality).

Discussing and exploring approaches/naming to regional-interregional- inter-local relations that may suit our approach and we can be comfortable with.

It is suggested that the name appears in a certain historical moment, and can be long enough that it is a possibility to change it. Examples suggested can be: including *grassroots* in the name, including *community*.

Aspects to question, on dominant mindsets and unequal relations

Financial dependence/ Dominance 1 – funding schemes + sending + economic structures in world + relations orgs

The existence of a predominant source (EU grants) and region (Europe) for international/global project grants has several consequences:

- > it is mostly an European-like way of doing projects + the institutionalisation of certain frameworks, which are not necessarily the only ones, the best ones, the ones which suit best each reality.
- > they are managed in Europe, usually by European professionals, more at ease with the specific project frameworks
- > the fact that they are well managed usually, according to the expectations, with good results, with a sense of inclusiveness and democracy... may hide that other ways, other approaches are not taking form.

The consequences of this is that we may “naturalise” the leadership of European organisations in the system, because they have more access to funding, to trainings and exchanges, more presence in general in international gatherings; and more incorporated the logics and frameworks of a certain model of project. And such situation is not natural, but provoked by a certain effort by certain institutions (EU-EC policies) to have a predominance in international politics/governance/social work

Solutions, suggestions and proposals

Achieving other sources of funding, through:

Training with external experts for alternative funding: if we are only managing one kind of range of funding, we may need other experiences that enlarge the access to different funds.

Leadership work on raising funds from other regions: the EC of CCIVS assumed the challenge in the last 2 mandates to raise and consolidate funding in different regions (Asia, Africa, America) than Europe, which would adapt better to self-defined priorities in those regions; but also to have a difference balance of power/leadership between regions.

The EC of CCIVS has not managed yet to do so. Besides improving their efforts, is it the moment to introduce different/complementary proposals? A cross- network effort to raise funds in other regions (eg. through Global Meeting agreements)? A cross-network experts group to raise funds in other regions?

Financial dependence/ Dominance 2

The differences in the sending capacity of organisations generate a difference in their financial capacity. These differences happen also at regional scales, where “northern” countries have more capacity of sending; and “southern” have more capacity to host, and usually very little sending capacity.

These realities (which are to be developed in a chapter also on Reciprocity of exchanges) reinforce a dynamic of northers going to southern regions, and despite the effect of understanding better and raising awareness, still it may contribute to consolidate a certain world vision of international relations, of north-south power relations; and not strengthen enough the idea of mutual and equal solidarity, of mutual needs and learning and equality. And besides the cultural images, it also does not reinforce the south-south cooperations, or the south>north exchange, which would contribute to strengthen real alternatives to global power relations.

Work on real reciprocity (and reciprocities)

Develop the outgoing capacity in not traditionally sending orgs; south-south and south – north (inclusive way). In many cases, the absence of sending does not respond to a lack of interest of the organisation. It has more to do with different factors: the difficulties for the obtention of visas; the absence of training-competences within the teams for organising an outgoing office; the socio-economic situation in the country, which makes that most people cannot afford the price of travelling, or leaving their place for a while.

Considering the fact that usually the *sending to the south* is a gain for northern organisations, it is especially relevant for northern organisations to consider contributing actively to the possibility of reciprocity, as a responsibility or as a must.

**Aspects to question,
on dominant mindsets and unequal relations**
Solutions, suggestions and proposals
Rooted perception – how perceive the otherness

How much do we perceive the diversity at the local level of our *own* projects, and deal with its differences properly?, to which extent our approach to all local communities we work with is always fair, horizontal, valorising, and with learning will enough?

Ensure the spaces for dialogue and common learning ; prioritise the development of relations, the strengthening of learning and of grassroots cooperation.

Practising and improving the practice and methods for multi-stakeholder approach. Develop participation and presence of local partners in activities

Clarifying: Is it so? Is this what we do, how we act, is this what we want?

Critical reflections and debates are necessary to dig deep into what we want to be, as organisations and as a movement. Questioning allow us to see the ugly part of who we are or may be. This would be discouraging if we think we don't have the strengths to improve, or that we do not have a positive impact and position with our work. But this is not the case; we just proved ourselves so with the impact research. But then we need to look at the shades and see how ugly we also are or may be. We are not necessarily so, and these are all aspects that we definitely want to avoid, and our system is thought, organised, dealt with the idea and the will not to fall in such potential inequities.

However, it will be only through a real critical analysis that we may identify where we are or may be failing, we need to be brave to assume our potential mistakes, to start building necessary alternatives that ensure that at least we try to take the best direction and we are not contradictory between our action and our vision. Those who for sure will not be coherent are those who do not dare to question themselves and change accordingly.

Part 2

Is IVS reproducing capitalist dynamics? What are the consequences of “free exchange” of volunteers? How to approach the reciprocity principle of IVS?

Once approaching the critical analysis of our system, it needs to be brought about the unbalance of exchanges, the unbalances of power related to the different positions of IVS actors, and the nature (and how it affects) of the exchange when we operate in IVS. As with the critics to capitalism, we may find that what the narratives we produce state (abandoning control in the exchange system -for example, there is no need of the incoming/outgoing balances between organisations or regions-, is more efficient and brings a good benefit to all parties), in fact such narratives may hide inequalities in the distribution of power, and hide also the consequences of a difference in the empowerment of the local people and communities in each side of the exchange relation. It may happen that we are strengthening the dominant dynamics of north-south relations and their cultural narratives.

In this chapter we put together the contents resulting of two different debates, coming out from the discussion themes of 2 groups, who started their analysis with a walking discussion to approach, the following questions:

GROUP 2.

Are we reproducing the capitalistic forms of relationships, trade, power?

What are the consequences of commercialisation of IVS exchanges? What should be left out of our relationships? What can be accepted?

Give 3 to 5 specific proposals to overcome each main aspect.

GROUP 3.

What about reciprocity?

What are the limits of not supporting an exactly balanced number of exchanges? What are the responsibilities towards international partners (in terms of reciprocity) with whom we exchange? What are the responsibilities towards local communities in both sides of the partnerships?

How to implement them?

The worries in the discussion for group 2 start at the moment in which at a certain historic point the exchanges between organisations increased a lot, to the point of not-always making a real relationship with a volunteer being sent abroad (obligatory pre-departure training included), the liberalisation of exchanges and suppression of unbalanced fees, and the increase in the sending-to-the-south, which was not complemented with an increase of south-south or south-north exchanges. Such changes produced an increase of the IVS activity and a higher dynamism in the system.

The group who approached the questions around capitalism proposed several elements from analysis, which were afterwards discussed in plenary as follows:

Capitalism as a method, a practice that manages difference of interests: The group opened the debate from a rather philosophical approach, as considering capitalism as a method to find solutions to the *different interests between different actors*; from such point of view, we could consider that IVS does the same thing -putting together in a system of exchange the diverse interest of actors in different levels. Following the interpretation, we could even find that, in the line of the *accumulation of capital* which is at the basis of capitalism; our stronger actors in the system have the capacity to use its bigger strength to generate, through an unbalanced (or *non-reciprocal*) flow of exchanges, a positive result and projects for all parts

in the game. In IVS, for example, mostly-hosting organisations are usually satisfied with their focus to host in local projects, and sending very few or no volunteers abroad.

In the debate that followed, the first element of the hypothesis was questioned, arguing that what responds to the definition of dealing with different interests is (not capitalism) but conflict management; and that capitalism is only an approach, a way, of dealing with such conflicts. From this point of view, capitalism approaches the conflict using the difference of power to set the relations and build solutions (that certainly benefit the powerful, arguing that their solutions will also benefit also the weaker side); while, on the contrary, IVS philosophy is based on horizontality in the system (networking, horizontal system of power), and empowerment of all actors involved; the way of dealing with conflict goes through ensuring the balance of power, solutions build from the grassroots and in agreement of the different parts, and ensuring reciprocity.

Therefore, if from this point of view there would be elements of the IVS process that resemble capitalism, this should be an alarm to be attentive and identify the differences in the use of power, and the unbalance in exchanges.

As it happens with capitalism, it may happen that, behind the apparent benefits to all parties, the dynamics we promote may reinforce unequal north-south relations, their narratives (north supports the south, for example, which is so alien to our concept of IVS where all regions support one and other, and the most important is the leadership of grassroots organisations in local communities).

A relevant conclusion for this analysis is that we need to stick to and clarify our vision, where we want to reach, and observe whether the systems of relations we manage are guiding us to such vision .

Reciprocity, its absence, and related challenges: The matter of reciprocity is usually understood regarding the exchange of volunteers; however it has more aspects which should be considered and addressed:

Reciprocity regarding volunteers exchange

Considering that, in the IVS system, *sending* is a way to generate income for organisations (at least in the north) -which of course allows to finance the hosting, and the running costs-, but in particular that, in many cases the *sending to the south*, generates usually quite a net income, as there are almost no volunteers coming from the south to the north. Considering, therefore, that this is not a natural dynamic, but something which benefits the northern organisations, or *mostly-sending* organisations, such organisations have a responsibility in approaching the reciprocity or the balance in the exchanges, or at least the consequences of such relations.

Does this point of departure mean that a fair balance in the exchanges would only be an equal number of exchanged volunteers between organisations or between regions? As replying yes to such question would even be totally unrealistic nowadays, let's answer that not necessarily. But at least it would mean to address equity-equality in the relations, ensuring that all parties take the issue with true responsibility regarding existing causes or challenges:

> **Migration policies:** A reason why volunteers in the south cannot travel to the north is that visa is very hardly given to candidates in the south (while in the inverse direction, there is hardly any issue). Networks, as systemic actors in IVS dynamics, have set several attempts to address the challenge (supporting with

official letters, launching communication and advocacy campaigns -attempts-, etc.). However, results are very limited. Therefore, it should be seen as a strategic exigence to set and achieve specific goals on this issue, step by step but firmly advancing with results.

For organisations who are sending volunteers to the south, it should be necessary to make a real effort to ensure a good follow-up, and have a proper system to gain victories in this area.

Furthermore, the existing practices of exchanges south-north and south-south should have a stronger place in communication, in order to *normalise* and valorise such experiences to public opinion and northern-restrictive governments with visa.

> *Economic issues:* Another very fundamental issue why there is a lack of volunteering candidates in the south would be about the economic differences between regions, which make it harder in some countries to identify potential volunteers with the capacity to travel abroad. In this sense, systemic actors like networks could or should offer or build a network-a system that allows to compensate such lack of capacity in order to promote reciprocity. While the Solidarity Fund of the CCIVS was closed during the network's difficult financial period (it would be time for CCIVS to take back a real initiative in this area), the Incoming Programme in SCI still works and shows a real possibility of strengthening both-ways exchange. If each network is not able to set their own system, maybe it is a matter of complementing or strengthening those programmes which already work.

On the other hand, individual organisations who are sending volunteers to the south, should implement programmes which involve such financial support, considering the level of income that also the existing exchange produces for them. [As an example, the old system of unbalanced fees that existed in Europe, would be able to finance, if applied to north-south exchanges, the participation of several volunteers in the south-north direction]. Such support could be directed to the most hosting organisations, or, considering the different situations, an attempt of a networking group of northern and southern organisations could be organised to facilitate the offer and flow; something like what exists in the Acces4All working group in the Alliance, where places (and financial supports) are not open on a bilateral basis, but among a group of organisations willing to participate.

> *Technical issues, technical support to set outgoing offices:* Several *mostly-hosting* organisations have expressed their will to start sending (as a matter of reciprocity, to promote IVS, or to strengthen their financial capacity), but, as there has never been a dynamic in the organisation (to send volunteers in a systematic way) or in their local realities to volunteer abroad, it is difficult for them to set an outgoing area with positive results. There are existing examples in the IVS movement of peer professional support regarding placement systems and competences; as it happens with buddy systems, specific events for peer training (before GAs or technical meetings); which happens in certain networks (Alliance, SCI) in a more internal way. It would be, though, necessary for the networks to ensure that such technical support is facilitated in some ways (specific actions within interregional projects, specific peer-training moments around central events). On the other hand, also strategic alliances on bilateral (or multilateral) basis have been appointed, for organisations to have job-shadowing opportunities, professional exchanges, and also to set a “privileged access” to certain camps that they can start promoting to specific groups which

may be identified as initial targets (for example, university students of specific specialities) that can allow focussing the efforts and achieving positive initial results.

Reciprocity in the empowerment: At a more internal level (and this aspect is suggested already in the former chapter on decolonising approaches), it is to be questioned to which extent people in local organisations or local communities where we have our projects are benefitted of the network of organisations, institutions and resources that the movement mobilises; and therefore have access to shared learning, peer-exchange and new networking opportunities as people in the “national offices” do have more usually. On this extent, in terms of network it should be more often considered to build programmes that can connect hosting communities /local organisations; and in terms of individual organisations, to focus also in facilitating the access to such opportunities for their hosting and local organisations.

Reciprocity in the communication: Also as suggested in an above chapter, it is quite seldom that hosting organisations get the proper credit and the proper space in the communication organisations do regarding their results and projects. Especially, when we consider interregional exchanges, and north-south relations, where leading roles of local or grassroots organisations in the south need to be underlined in order to break the image of dependency and aid that is narrated globally in north-south exchanges.

Voluntourism as a source of synergies or partnerships, as a possible practice?

Taking the example of some of the practices in the business field, which may increase efficiency, diversify sources of income or have a more professionalised communication area, for example; the question was raised on whether voluntourist practices could work well as an example, for synergies or partnerships, or as a practice. On its favour, it was put on the table that while IVS organisations struggle in keeping the sending capacity, voluntourist organisations are flourishing and expanding. Wouldn't it be possible to approach their local partners, their practices and see if there are compatibilities; in any case, don't they have volunteers too?

The arguments which, as a response, were put on the other side of the balance were: that the main purpose of a voluntourist company is to benefit the owners of the company, as this is why they are companies and not associations or NGOs: they aim at making money, and that is the purpose of them having people “acting as” volunteers. The former aspect influences clearly the following one, which is that in any voluntourist model, the settings will be designed according to the interest and standards of the company and of the costumer (who, besides acting as a volunteer, will in any case be a costumer), which will determine the form and/or the existence of a project. In voluntourism, therefore, the main decision making power will always be on the side of the company, as well as the decisions about the design of the project, its continuity,...

Precisely because of these reasons, voluntourism would be exactly the contrary to our vision:

- > IVS is based on community projects to reinforce them;
- > based on horizontal relations between all parts, which make part of the project;
- > it ensures the basic relation between an organisation in the sending part and an organisation for the hosting, the IVS networking, so that sending and hosting parts are sure to pursue the same aims and agree on the principles of the volunteering;
- > considering that north-south relations are characterised by an idea of aid and dependency, and this is something we would want to transform, it is our responsibility to make the other narrative stronger and visible.

If we would find that some of the above aspects do not work necessarily so, then it is there our weakness, and our need to improve that aspect, so that what we do is who we really are. As we have observed in the impact research, it is not the fact of having “persons acting as

volunteers”, or “people from abroad coming”, or the “support in resources”, what brings the changes that we are aiming: it is the craft making of the methodology in any case, the careful setting of the system of relations, the preparation of hosts, communities, coordinators, volunteers, the learning and networking of organisations, etc. therefore the constant attention to build the IVS according to our values, what brings the real change as we envision it.