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VOLUNTEERING FOR

CLIMATE ACTION

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On behalf of the authors, AVI and Forum are very proud to launch this important paper at IVCO 2020.

We thank all those who contributed to this survey.

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“The poorest half of the global population are responsible for only around 10% of global emissions yet live overwhelmingly in the countries most vulnerable to climate change – while the richest 10% of people in the world are responsible for around 50% of global emissions.”

— Oxfam 2015 (Gore, 2015 p1.)



Introduction

International volunteer cooperation for development is a people to people development modality that seeks to share skills and knowledge through mutual respect and trust to build understanding and capacity in people, organisations and systems. IVCOs operate at the interface between multiple stakeholders, such as volunteers, partner organisations and primary actors to enable their distinct aspirations to be met and contribute to development objectives. IVCOs locate these relationships and activities within an overall framework of volunteering for (and in) development.

In the past twenty years this has tended to be linked to global development objectives and since 2015 this has seen a widespread commitment to focusing on the achievement of the universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, given COVID 19 and insufficient progress on Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, the UN has called for an action and recovery decade for the SDGs and the need for acceleration to reach the SDG targets. UNDP has defined ‘accelerators’ as “catalytic policy and/or programme areas that can trigger positive multiplier effects across SDGs and targets,” (United Nations Development Programme 2017 p.8). Volunteering is well placed as an accelerator for Agenda 2030 and SDG 13 Climate Action is a strategic example of this.

At the recent UNV and IFRC convened Global Technical Meeting on Reimagining Volunteering for the 2030 Agenda, 4 key areas were identified relating to the Acceleration Matrix on Volunteering for the SDGs. They are multiplier effects, tackling inequalities, systems thinking and acting within human and planetary boundaries (United Nations Volunteers 2020). Drawing on the work of the Institute of Development Studies framework for ‘Valuing Volunteering,’ the acceleration matrix highlights 6 distinctive contributions where volunteering can make a difference and uses climate action as a strategic example of how it can be done. These 6 distinctive contributions are solidarity, ownership, participation, innovation, inspiration, and inclusion (Burns, Picken et al. 2015, United Nations Volunteers 2020).

Figure 1: Six distinctive contributions of volunteering for climate action



These 6 areas overlap significantly with the climate and volunteering literature review undertaken for this paper. This demonstrates that volunteers, VIOs and IVCOs have work and philosophies which resonate or overlap with many elements of the climate movement ranging from the emphasis on **reciprocity, solidarity and inclusion** (Judge 2004, McBride, Sherraden et al. 2007, Butcher 2010, Devereux 2010, Manatschal and Freitag 2014, Lough and Oppenheim 2017) to **global exchange** (Polak, Guffler et al. 2017) and **global citizenship, participation and community ownership** (Measham and Lumbasi 2013, Axon 2016, United Nations Volunteers 2017, Christie 2007, Plewes and Stuart 2007, Comhlamh 2015, Comhlamh, Volunteering Matters et al. 2016) as well as **collective impact** (Allum and Onuki 2019). Responding to climate change provides an opportunity to leverage and scale up these existing approaches for climate action.

This paper starts with a brief overview of the causes and the urgency of climate change and the key issues this raises globally and how this connects to volunteering. We then outline the literature on climate change and volunteering, drawing on secondary academic and practitioner sources that describe how volunteering intersects with the core concerns of climate action. It does this by connecting to the four IVCO 2020 themes of advocacy and awareness; adaptation and resilience; capacity building; and policies and systems. The contemporary views of VIOs are also explored using the primary research findings from a 2020 survey of volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) undertaken as part of this study. Key issues linking volunteering for development and climate action and justice are addressed, using case studies to illustrate the nature and extent of VIOs' climate action activities, including principles of good practice. Finally, we set out a set of recommendations for future IVCO strategies and activities.



AVI colleagues gather before joining one of Australia's nation-wide Global Climate Strikes on 20 September 2020, marching alongside approximately 100,000 protesters in Melbourne's CBD. Picture supplied by AVI

Climate Change: what are the key issues?

“Limiting warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels would require transformative systemic change, integrated with sustainable development. Such change would require the upscaling and acceleration of the implementation of far reaching, multilevel and cross-sectoral climate mitigation and addressing barriers. Such systemic change would need to be linked to complementary adaptation actions... Current national pledges on mitigation and adaptation are not enough to stay below the Paris Agreement temperature limits and achieve its adaptation goals.”

— **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2018 p.40)**

The Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in Article 1, defines climate change as: ‘a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.’ Despite some controversial media portrayals, the scientific evidence of human induced climate change is readily available and undisputed (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2018).

The threat from climate change is not only about the future – it is about the present and requires identifying the most strategic places where volunteering can leverage and accelerate change. Without action there is every expectation the impact of climate change will worsen.

“Science tells us that, even if we are successful in limiting warming to 1.5 °C, we will face significantly increased risks to natural and human systems. Yet, the data in this report show that 2019 was already 1.1 °C warmer than the pre-industrial era. The consequences are already apparent. More severe and frequent floods, droughts and tropical storms, dangerous heatwaves and rising sea levels are already severely threatening lives and livelihoods across the planet.”

— **Antonio Guterres in WMO Statement on the State of the Global Climate in 2019 p.4¹**

¹ Sources of scientific data include the IPCC and **Grantham Institute, Imperial College UK**
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/grantham>

A key concern is not just the impact of climate change – but also a fundamental issue about accountability, equity and justice which is the foundation for long term international development. Those least responsible for climate change are also those suffering most from its impacts. As the headline quote from an Oxfam report shows, there is a clear contrast between the countries who have been the biggest contributors to climate

change (i.e. industrialised and wealthy countries) and those who most face their effects (i.e. poor and less-developed countries-and marginalised groups even in wealthy countries). This reality is illustrated starkly in Figures 2 & 3 below, taken from of an Oxfam report produced for the Paris Climate Summit (Gore, 2015).

These political and power considerations demonstrate that evidence about climate change is no longer the sticking point. There has been a political reluctance to act on the evidence of climate change and effect the necessary transition to reduce or eliminate practices that cause it. This indicates the widespread challenge of what is required both in terms of changing views and behaviours.

Figure 2: Most of the world's richest 10% high CO₂ emitters still live in rich OECD Countries

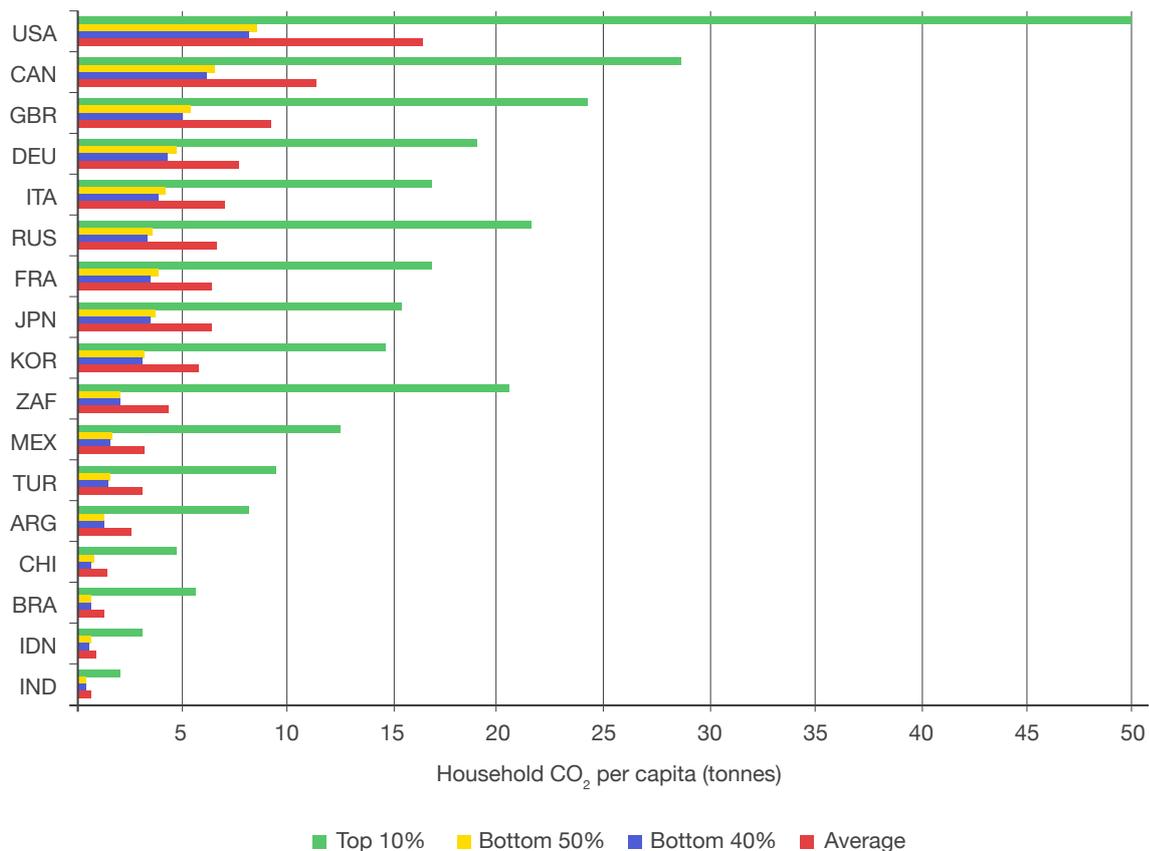
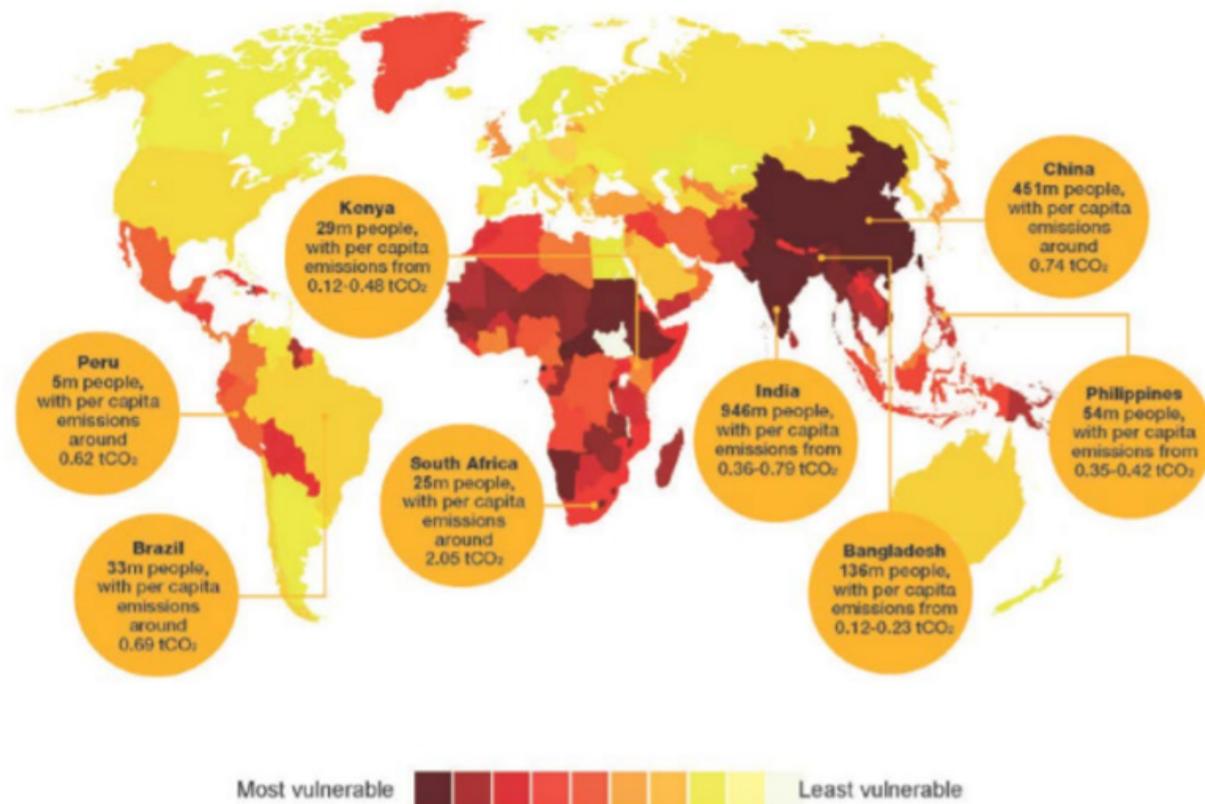


Figure 3: The scale of lifestyle consumption emission footprint by the poorest half of the global population



Climate change literature suggests that arguably “the most urgent questions regarding climate change are now socio-cultural ones” for example: “how do people come to hold and act on certain beliefs regarding environmental conditions and processes?” and “how do institutional forms and histories shape and constrain the views and options of various sorts of actors?” (McCarthy, Chen et al. 2014 p665). This suggests the importance of finding ways that climate change messages can be made more personally relevant to engender citizen action-particularly in developed countries. One productive proposition is to highlight regionally relevant activities contributing to the problem along with felt and projected impacts, as well as local opportunities for emissions reduction (Scannell and Gifford 2013).

The basis upon which volunteering for climate action is constructed and prioritised cannot ignore climate justice and should apply the 6 distinctive volunteer contributions referenced above starting with **solidarity**. As we have seen, the impact of climate change is experienced differentially across the planet. The imbalance between who continues to generate activity that causes climate change and those who will continue to be affected most by climate change is apparent and instructive. Pursuing a course of climate action must therefore be firmly based on a recognition of climate justice and mediated by the relational approach of volunteering that has the potential to change hearts and minds and behaviour (in the North and South) through elements such as ownership, inspiration, experiential learning, participation and solidarity.

What do we know about volunteering and climate action?²

The information in this paper about the relationship between volunteering and climate action draws on a review of academic literature; the accompanying survey to this paper; reports and papers produced by IVCOs; and examples of the action taken.

The lead up to the UN climate summit in Copenhagen at the end of 2009 appears to have been an important moment for recognising the importance of climate change amongst those connected to volunteering for development. A rise in climate change citizen advocacy emerged and was reflected in national legislation in anticipation of the summit (Fankhauser, Averchenkova et al. 2018). We find similar rising concern amongst VIOs. The IFRC placed climate change mitigation and adaptation³ on the agenda from its 2007 international Congress (International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2015). The International Forum on Volunteering in Development (Forum) published two climate action papers before and after the UN summit (Brook 2007, Mulligan 2010).

We can also identify conscious attempts at programmes related to climate change. For example, at the time of the Copenhagen climate conference the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme implemented a pilot project that partnered volunteers with a UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Global Environment Fund (GEF) project. This was designed to implement community-based adaptation (CBA) to enhance the resilience of communities and/or the ecosystems on which these communities rely for their livelihoods (United Nations Volunteers and Volunteer and Service Enquiry South Africa 2010, Onestini 2013). The CBA project evaluation concluded that the project successfully “created small-scale ‘project/policy laboratories’ and generated knowledge about how to achieve adaptation at the local level in developing countries” (Onestini 2013 p.6).

2 This section focuses particularly on the role of international volunteer cooperation organizations (IVCOs). Therefore, the transnational focus is highlighted throughout, but often as a complementary framework for diverse volunteering modalities including community-based volunteering and national volunteering. IVCOs are mostly headquartered in developed countries but focus their work in less developed countries. However, over the last 20 years development agencies and IVCOs have increasingly begun addressing the structural causes of poverty and inequality through a global and local rights-based approach.

3 Mitigation – involves reducing the flow of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, either by reducing sources of these gases (for example, the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heat or transport) or enhancing the “sinks” that accumulate and store these gases (such as the oceans, forests and soil). Adaptation – adapting to life in a changing climate – involves adjusting to actual or expected future climate. (<https://climate.nasa.gov/solutions/adaptation-mitigation/>)

In comparison with the scale of the problems, there has been a dearth of academic literature on volunteering and climate change, particularly studies that directly link them.⁴ Considering conservation and environmental work was one of the first international volunteer endeavours, it seems strange that a more extensive body of literature on volunteering and the environment has not been developed.⁵

UNV CBA Project with UNDP and GEF

“The overall objective to include volunteerism practices was to mainstream and strengthen the capacity of community volunteering in order to enhance grassroots capacity to adapt to climate change. ... The other important aspect was to use the UN Volunteers as participatory researchers while working with community groups....To a great degree this has occurred, either by design or because volunteerism is an intrinsic aspect to community actions. This is shown, first of all, by the fact that all CBA projects included significant in-kind contributions from the community. A document named *Volunteers’ Contributions to community-based adaptation (CBA) to climate change*:

A handbook, training guide and work plan to support, promote and measure volunteering in UNDP-GEF CBA projects was produced by UN Volunteers”

— Onestini 2013 p.36

The relatively few but well documented long-term volunteer climate action projects and policy initiatives contrast with a greater quantity of literature related to either national or short-term international volunteer initiatives and pedagogies linked to the environment or to a lesser extent climate change.

Given a strategic emphasis on enhancing climate action - particularly in developed countries - the literature on **motivation** for environmental volunteering is significant and important. Measham and Barnett (2008) proposed six motivating factors for “volunteers in an environmental context: (1) contributing to community; (2) social interaction;

⁴ Several possible reasons for the limited scholarship and reporting on volunteering and climate action include: the nature of climate change as a **wicked problem** that is not easily defined or tackled by simple definitions or actions (Lehtonen, Salonen et al. 2018) and the **relational approach** of volunteering (Devereux 2010, Lough and Moore McBride 2014, Burns and Howard 2015) that makes understanding connections and impacts of volunteering difficult to measure. Practices that are linked to climate action are diverse and can take the form of environmental rehabilitation, conservation, disaster risk reduction, sustainable livelihoods and food security, gender inequality etc. Furthermore, projects that are linked to climate action may emphasize solutions that directly related but are described in more specific terms such as coastal zone management programming that might involve local, national and international volunteering efforts.

⁵ IVCOs like Service Civil International (SCI) active following the Second World War had leading objectives “to promote the ideas of peace, international understanding and solidarity, social justice and environmental protection.” (as cited in Chystyakova, 2015). Environmental volunteering also has a collective element not so common in human service volunteering which often tends to be more individually focused. Pretty and Ward (2001) highlighted these early days of volunteering through grassroots environmental organisations and the frequently collective nature of it.

(3) personal development; (4) learning about the environment; (5) a general ethic of care for the environment; (6) an attachment to a particular place.”(Measham and Barnett 2008 p.540). These were translated into five key (potentially complementary)

modes of practical environmental volunteer activity: “activism, education, monitoring, restoration and (promoting) sustainable living”. These can be directly linked to the six distinctive contributions of volunteering for climate action highlighted on page 3.

The volunteer’s common attachment to where they volunteer is of particular interest since it gives a new way of seeing the global phenomenon of climate change with a personal relevance and locally framed understanding and positive gender bias (Scannell and Gifford 2013). Such apparently indirect non climate frames can be effective tools for enhancing public support for climate policy on the grounds of supposedly ‘non climate’ benefits that people see as more directly relevant (Walker, Kurz et al. 2018).

One way of considering the relationship between volunteering and climate change is in relation to the models of volunteering for development Plewes and Stuart (2007).⁶ They provided a robust and simple framework of three overlapping IVCO models. First is the ‘development model’ where IVCOs send volunteers to do capacity development in international development; second is the ‘learning model’ aimed at developing global citizenship; and third is the civil society strengthening model in societies at home and abroad. They identified volunteer contributions in the area of the volunteer themselves, the partners and communities where they are assigned and global engagement.

Within this framework it is possible to focus on distinct but interconnected areas: advocacy and awareness, which includes the awareness of volunteers as well as partner organisations and communities, addressing local and global engagement; issues of adaptation and resilience as a conscious and direct response to climate change issues at partner and community level, offering models of volunteer activity; and capacity building, which embraces some of the traditional models of volunteering for development as a process. In addition, there is a consideration of a fourth area which relates to how IVCOs and VIOs can affect governmental policies and systems

⁶ This influential paper was presented at IVCO conference, Montreal 2007

Volunteering and climate change: Engaging in Advocacy and raising awareness

The potential role of volunteers in promoting awareness amongst the communities where they are assigned on a range of development issues has been a longstanding feature of volunteering for development. Promoting knowledge about HIV/AIDS and community health is one such example. Using the learning as a volunteer to focus on advocacy and public engagement post-assignment has also been considered an important potential role of volunteers that other development activities do not offer.

The literature on **volunteering and the environment** (with a smaller subsection on volunteering and climate change) covers areas such as the volunteering and policy/practice interface (Sibley 2010, Walker, Kurz et al. 2018); education and volunteering for developing agency for climate change action (McNeill and Vaughn 2012); volunteering and pro environmental attitudes (García-Valiñas, Macintyre et al. 2012, Valentine, King et al. 2018); and volunteering through citizen or community science for environmental monitoring, mapping, education and advocacy (United Nations Volunteers 2017, Chase and Levine 2018).

Volunteering for the environment and climate change can be a strategic experiential learning opportunity for IVCO volunteers. It cultivates a 'new pair of eyes' through practical volunteer experience and 'an attachment to place' that can connect and tackle the policy problem of seeing environmental issues as an isolated policy problem rather than a transdisciplinary one that connects across different lived realities, sectors and geographies (Sibley 2010).

There is some evidence from research studies that are not primarily focused on environment. As part of the Valuing Volunteering research project led by VSO in partnership with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), one volunteer working in the Philippines explicitly documented volunteering and natural resource issues with some direct reference to climate change (Aked 2014, Aked 2015). The findings highlighted that environmental education was important but not sufficient for behaviour change and that positive volunteering experiences were significant for continued environmental advocacy.

Raising Awareness and Protecting a Natural Park

“Since 2001, the Tubbataha Management Office (TMO), a government office, has looked after the protection of Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park... at the heart of the Coral Triangle, considered the richest marine site on earth, and a fish bank for the Sulu Sea. In 2009–10, TMO introduced a volunteering programme to carry out environmental education in schools and coastal barangays. Key learning points [from the VSO research there] include:

- Closing the gap in knowledge and understanding seemed to be contingent on volunteers’ creative and interactive delivery, their personal characteristics (e.g. being young and knowledgeable about the environment) and the support they received from TMO.
- Even when volunteer educators are successful at raising awareness, there is no guarantee this will trigger behaviour change. Understanding may be a necessary condition but is not sufficient.
- A systemic view of poverty highlights the numerous constraints within and from outside communities that prevent shifts in behaviour.
- The links between positive volunteer experiences and future environmental advocacy were supported by our research findings.”

— Aked 2015 p.8

The focus on how volunteer programming can generate awareness and link to advocacy can be seen in the approach of CCIVS, who have placed climate change as a central feature of their volunteering workcamps alongside peace action and have promoted a global campaign on climate justice while also focused on internal operations to address the impact on climate change⁷.

CCIVS offers a model where climate change is placed at the centre of the activities of the network and its members. For a significant number of workcamps the issue of climate change and future sustainability is present throughout workcamp activities, supported by a similar focus in educational work and attempts to facilitate members to operate in an increasingly sustainable way. Climate change is central to the volunteer experience and the impact surveys demonstrate the value of this approach.⁸

⁷ See Annex 1 for a more detailed account of the CCIVS approach

⁸ See <https://ccivs.org/research/impact-assessment-report/>

In addition to providing toolkits for its members, CCIVS has a strong relationship with UNESCO and accesses those forums to present data from members' work and set out the case for climate justice.

“Volunteers are not only the workers whom scientists ask to carry out various activities without requiring much understanding or input and critical engagement. They also bring in different social values and are a source of local knowledge and insights”

– (Buzier et al, 2012)

Raising awareness through citizen led knowledge generation and advocacy – volunteers and citizen science

There has been positive recognition of citizen science undertaken in conservation projects at home and overseas even if the geographic spread is relatively limited (Turrini, Dörler et al. 2018, Peter, Diekötter et al. 2019). Citizen science in ecological restoration has demonstrated the value of local people's knowledge and contextual insights because “Volunteers are not only the workers whom scientists ask to carry out various activities without requiring much understanding or input and critical engagement. They also bring in different social values and are a source of local knowledge and insights”. As UNV have highlighted ‘volunteers producing reliable data can lead to greater citizen participation in decision-making processes and accountability. It can also produce bottom-up collective action that pressures authorities to act on climate change and become more responsive to the needs of excluded groups and individuals’

– (UNV, 2018 p.3)

Volunteering and Climate Change: Working with communities on adaptation and building resilience

Bonnie Learmonth's paper on IVCO climate action in the Pacific (Learmonth 2020) documents in detail many practical contemporary examples of volunteers strengthening adaptation and resilience in the Pacific, so we refer readers to these for helpful insights. One particularly significant role of volunteers in adaptation and resilience is exemplified and documented in the long running area of volunteer engagement in **disaster risk response and reduction** (DRR). IFRC has been very active globally in this area for many years in practical preparation and responses (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2009). DRR has been a longstanding practical area where grassroots people have made and do make a difference in the face of climate change. The Hyogo framework and the Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 explicitly recognise the distinctive contribution of volunteering (United Nations 2005, United Nations 2015).

IFRC has a longstanding involvement related to disaster risk reduction and has explicitly focused on mitigation and adaptation in respect of climate change since 2007. This now includes climate action training materials and policies for how staff and volunteers and IFRC operate.

One early example which linked disaster response, community adaptation and the issues on inequality and underlying causality, responded to the devastating hurricane Mitch in Central America. This project was developed in 2001 by the IVCO Progressio to bring practical benefits to Central American communities affected by the hurricane while ‘building back better’ with a program to improve the resilience of poor communities. This was approached by tackling environmental vulnerability on the ground and highlighting the structural causes and consequences of inequality through publications in the UK. (Progressio 2006e, Devereux 2010).

The Progressio environmental vulnerability project in Central America¹⁰

“Largely reported by the media as a ‘natural’ disaster, the underlying story of Mitch, as underscored by CIIR’s 2001 publication *Storm Warnings*, was one of over-exploitation of natural resources [for survival for some groups-and for export led national economic growth for others]. Uncontrolled logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, land clearance for cattle and intensive cash crop production had exacerbated the vulnerability of Honduras and Nicaragua [and particularly its marginalised communities] to the hurricane’s damage. Complementing partners’ growing expertise in sustainable agriculture as a key livelihood Strategy [for the poor], ICD’s three-year initiative in Central America ran environmental education campaigns, set up community monitoring committees and provided training in land planning and water use. It also engaged local agencies working on natural resource management and promoted longer-term support for sustainability by working with teachers and school children to raise public awareness of environmental issues. The project achieved land reforestation, crop diversification and the greater involvement of women in training and productive activities. It also fostered better conditions for stronger interaction between the target groups, narrowing the typical gap between official planners, environmental ‘specialists’ and communities supposedly lacking awareness and knowledge of the issues at stake. Work with partners put local people in a stronger position to provide their own input into discussions of better practice and encourage agencies to consider how poverty and inequality affected their situation”

(Barnes 2019 p.153).

— **Barnes, J. (2019).**

¹⁰ Originally called the Catholic Institute of International Relations, CIIR was rebranded as Progressio.

Volunteering and Climate Change: Capacity building of partner organisations and volunteers

The focus of volunteering on capacity building of partner organisations can be seen as a concern to achieve sustainable organisations and changes in practice that are embraced by local partners and communities. It contrasts with the volunteer as an interim deliverer of services, meeting of skills shortages.

As we have seen, the primary focus of VIO activity presents as one of adaptation. The tendency is to see climate change as a programming issue and one where programme activity could change. Based on the review of literature and the 2020 survey findings presented above, we see an emphasis on areas such as livelihoods and resource management and the building of community resilience in anticipation or in response to sudden (e.g. tsunami or hurricane) or long term (e.g. drought) disasters. Such an approach enables the use of V4D volunteer models, where international and national volunteers can be used as agents of change, capacity builders, or providers of expertise to specific communities or organisations. In this way, a focus in the Global South on climate change adaptation is enabled by an adjustment of programme focus or modalities.

In this context, IVCOs are well placed with a level of expertise in working with local partners to build their capacity in respect to the impact of climate change. This may not be straightforward. It is entirely possible that short-term volunteering may promote and support capacity building. But the global expansion of **short-term international conservation volunteers** has faced some criticism because of the limited geographic and environmental focus of the predominant locations and work that focuses more on volunteer preferences or even glamour (Lorimer 2010)¹¹.

Capacity building can also be seen as transformative when capacity is built in volunteers as well as primary on the ground actors and this allows embrace and action of SDG 4.7 by ensuring ‘all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality’. This mutual capacity development then feeds in to strategically tackling ‘system gaps and bottlenecks’ highlighted by the UNV Acceleration toolkit and relating not just to practical action but directly engaging with Policies and Systems to tackle causes not just symptoms of climate change as highlighted in the next section.

¹¹ The criticisms have been similar to the longstanding critiques of short term voluntourism that potentially makes situations like orphanages worse rather than better for vulnerable groups - just to make volunteers feel good (Luh Sin, Oakes et al. 2015). An ACFID Practice Note on Responsible International Volunteering for Development (ACFID, 2018) was prepared by AVI in collaboration with ACFID member organisations to help tackle such problems.

The important contribution of IVCOs to capacity building of volunteers links to Plewes and Stewarts models of learning and civil society strengthening. These have been increasingly highlighted in recent years by many publications like the Comhlamh publications encouraging shifts in thinking from volunteers and returned volunteers to active Citizens or the VSO publication looking at impacts beyond volunteering (Comhlamh 2015, Comhlamh, Volunteering Matters et al. 2016, Clark and Lewis 2017).

Volunteering and Climate Change: Influencing key stakeholders' policies and systems

There is some suggestion that governmental support for volunteer programmes has provided 'space' for IVCOs to widen their focus on climate change. This links directly to what Jean Christie highlighted earlier that IVCOs are coming to understand that 'profound structural changes are needed globally, including policy change in their own countries' (Christie, 2007). This is even shown in two recent international volunteer evaluations. The Canadian government highlights the role of Volunteer Cooperation Agencies (VCAs) in Canada tackling climate change at home and abroad. A 2018 evaluation of the Canadian Volunteer Cooperation Program highlighted in its recommendations the importance of mitigation in Canada and overseas when it suggested:

"VCAs be proactive in showcasing, both in Canada and within the target countries, examples of volunteer initiatives directly related to raising environmental awareness and eliminating or mitigating environmental harms, including actions related to climate change and adaptation." (Project Services International in consortium with Plan:Net Limited 2019 p.110).¹²

A 2019 independent evaluation of the Australian Volunteers Program's thematic impact areas highlighted in its recommendations "the lower proportion of the program portfolio that aligns with Climate Change, Disaster Resilience and Food Security" and recommended the Program "should consider a variety of options to more effectively engage across this impact area".

¹² The full report of the Canadian evaluation has not been made public. However, the Global Affairs Canada management response said: "The department recognizes the importance of being proactive in presenting examples of volunteer initiatives directly related to environmental awareness and the elimination or mitigation of environmental harm" (Global Affairs Canada 2019).

It suggested:

“Strategic partnerships should be prioritised, for example improving links between the Australian Volunteers Program and DFAT’s climate change expertise, strategic selection of local partner organisations and Australian organisations working on climate change issues to ensure volunteer assignments are appropriately scoped and new relationships with influential partner organisations are developed and maintained”

– (Gero et al, 2019 p 38)

The DFAT management response highlighted that “the program should strengthen the depth of engagement in the climate change/disaster resilience/food security impact area, and document and communicate results” (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2019 p.6).

The Acceleration toolkit (UNV, 2020 p.21) provides a framework for tackling strategic interlinkages in its SDG priorities worksheet. It highlights practical ways volunteer groups can analyse and respond to ‘system gaps and bottlenecks’ through a series of questions that recognise the importance of what it terms ‘different spheres’ for strategic action at home and abroad¹³ including:

- How does addressing these challenges align with identified local, national, regional, or global development priorities?
- What obstacles or bottlenecks stand in the way of accelerating progress in this area? (Consider various categories, such as knowledge and capacities, data and information, infrastructure and resources, political will, public opinion, opposition from vested interests, etc.)
- How could positive interlinkages (synergies) across other SDGs be activated and potential negative ones (trade-offs) be minimized?
- How important is this problem for people in the local context, or within your sphere?
- How could this challenge be addressed **within your sphere**, through programme interventions, policies, education and awareness, technological innovations, data generation, or other means?

If there is a growing space for IVCOs to go beyond a programmatic approach to climate change to ‘tackling system gaps and bottlenecks’, will they have the motivation and organisational capacity (and blessing of donors) to take it?

¹³ For example. supporting Fiji’s Alliance for Future Generations - a formal platform that brings together urban and rural young people around SDG issues, with a focus on climate action in two ways. First on the ground in Fiji and second by giving voice to their work and concerns in the global North. See their Table Error! Main Document Only.. Volunteering for SDG Acceleration Table (UNV, 2020)

Adaptation and mitigation: What choices for IVCOs?

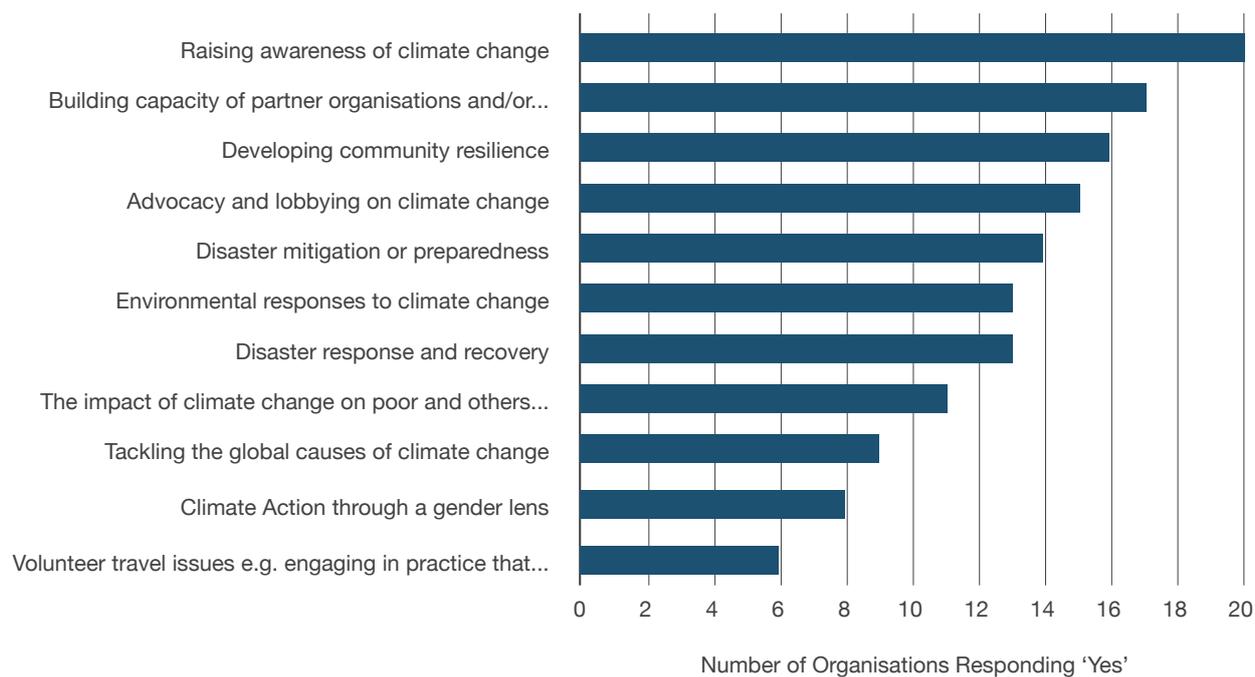
A key divide in the literature is between a focus on adaptation (action to minimise the damage of climate change already in the ecosystem) and mitigation (action to prevent, reduce and stabilize the threat of climate change).¹⁴ This conceptual and political separation between adaptation and mitigation has potentially profound consequences for the focus of VIO programme activity, especially IVCOs. Both approaches are needed and combined they offer a way to address the challenges of climate change.

The significance is that despite the three aspects of the model set out by Plewes and Stuart, IVCOs most common priority (reinforced or led by funding requirements) is for the ‘development model’ which leads to a focus on capacity building and adaptation approaches in the Global South. VIOs, perhaps working within national boundaries, may also be concerned primarily with adaptation, especially if they are based in the Global South. Given the expertise that IVCOs have in people to people development, which is demonstrated in examples in the IVCO survey and Langforth (2020), it is likely IVCOs will maintain effective approaches to building local partner capacity and community resilience to address the challenges of climate change.

A survey undertaken with VIOs as part of this study (see Allum Devereux, Lough and Tiessen 2020 2020) supports this proposition. It was found that “an emphasis on programmes and activities focused on adaptation, with over half of the respondents mentioning only adaptive approaches. These vary from simple statements, such as “Building capacity in organisations that respond to climate change” to more comprehensive accounts of building resilience.” (Allum, Devereux, Lough and Tiessen 2020, p.2)

¹⁴ “A mix of adaptation and mitigation options to limit global warming to 1.5°C, implemented in a participatory and integrated manner, can enable rapid, systemic transitions in urban and rural areas” Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2018.

Figure 4: Does Your Organisation focus its activities on any of the following areas at home or abroad relate to climate change



Source: Allum, Devereux, Lough and Tiessen 2020, p.6



September 2019 March for the Planet! On September 27, more than 7 million people around the world marched in the global climate strike. In Montreal, over 500,000 people took to the streets to march with young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg and demand that significant, effective measures be taken in response to the climate crisis, at both individual and societal levels, and with support from the various levels of government. CECI's staff, members, volunteers and pledging members joined this historic event, both in Canada and in Africa

Future expectations indicate a strengthening of current VIOs activity on climate change but addressing areas they already covered at the moment.

“what respondents thought had changed most in the past were expected to be more likely to change in the future; and the dimensions that had changed least in the past were less likely to change in the future.” (ibid, p.9. Emphasis in the original)

However, this emphasis on adaptation and capacity building – which is the development model in the Plewes and Stuart framework - arguably neither addresses the learning or civil society strengthening models, which are essential to address the challenge of climate justice.



Future paths for IVCOs on climate change and climate justice

A pathway yet to be taken?

Given the past and projected emphasis on areas such as adaptation and capacity building of Global South partners, this poses the question of where mitigation fits in the activities of IVCOs and VIOs. This is not a new question, nor is it without an answer. It was posed to IVCOs in the FORUM discussion paper in 2010:

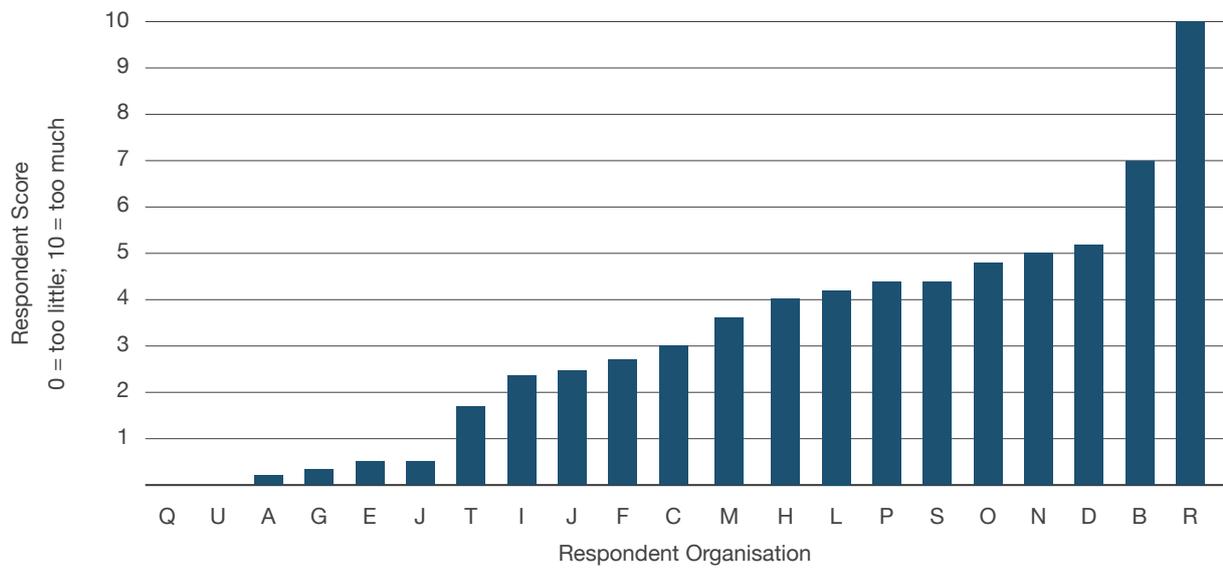
“Where can agencies have most impact? Impact can be measured in different ways. At one level agencies could try and impact on mitigation, i.e. reducing emissions. If agencies want to impact on the countries with the highest per capita emissions, then it would need to focus on advocacy in the global North.” (Mulligan 2010 p.8).

Secondly, it is hard not to conclude that the literature and historic practice of volunteering and climate change sits in the arenas where other issues are more central concerns. It is worth noting, as referenced earlier, that Forum produced two papers around the time of the Copenhagen climate summit both of which focused on climate change. The first paper highlighted the need for emissions reductions, including tackling the challenging necessity of air travel by international volunteers (Brook 2007). The second paper cited above highlighted climate change as a social justice issue and suggested 5 strategic options for IVCOs (Mulligan 2010 p.10):

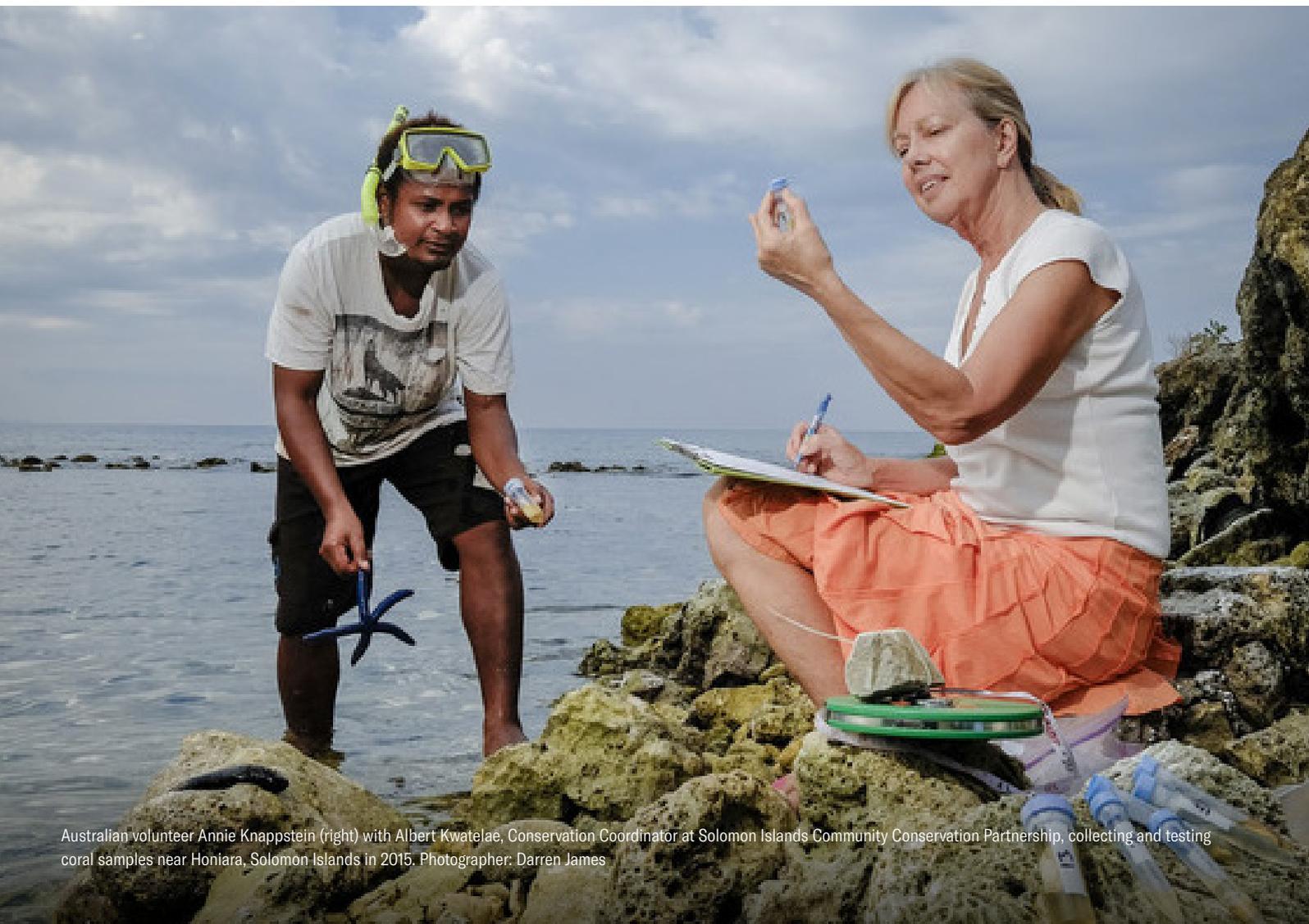
1. Tackling their own carbon footprints
2. Mainstreaming climate change across IVCOs' programmes
3. Addressing climate change through secure livelihoods and natural resource management programmes
4. Deliberately focusing on climate change as a key programme area
5. Increasing advocacy and global education about climate change

While livelihoods and natural resource management have been the most commonly implemented actions, all of these strategic options still appear very pertinent for VIOs and IVCOs. This is supported by the VIO survey which explored whether VIOs thought that as a sector they were doing enough on climate change issues. The results concluded that “nearly half of the respondents indicate a serious concern that VIOs are doing too little, there is also a significant, if smaller, number who consider that VIOs are getting it about right on climate change.” (ibid, p.12). This is reflected in Figure 5 taken from the report and reproduced below, which shows the range of views of VIOs on this issue but does highlight that most suggest more could be done.

Figure 5: Do you think volunteer involving organisations are doing too much, too little or about right on climate action?



Source: Allum, Devereux, Lough and Tiessen, 2020



Australian volunteer Annie Knappstein (right) with Albert Kwatela, Conservation Coordinator at Solomon Islands Community Conservation Partnership, collecting and testing coral samples near Honiara, Solomon Islands in 2015. Photographer: Darren James

Climate Change and contradictions in Volunteering for Development

The VIO survey also showed that despite the strong values commitment held by many VIOs, the term climate justice was rarely mentioned. This is despite IVCOs commitment to a relational approach demonstrating values of equality and justice.

Climate action poses some very significant challenges for IVCOs, especially where international volunteers are concerned. The data on Global CO2 emissions by income and region is shown below in Figure 6. It highlights the somewhat awkward juxtaposition of Global North volunteers working on adaptation in the Global South as illustrated below.

VSO Ireland recognised:

“VSO volunteers and local partner organisations are doing what they can on the ground but, ultimately, political action to reverse deforestation and eliminate fossil fuels is urgently needed.... At the moment, Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions per person are the eighth largest in the world according to the Environmental Protection Agency” (O’Sullivan 2018).

Peace Corps focus on adaptation over mitigation is reflected in the Peace Corps 2014 policy on climate change which focused on adaptation (Longstein and Pimpedly 2014). Volunteers have recognised a similar dilemma, reflected in a recent returned volunteer post:

“There is an objection to be found in the **hypocrisy of a wealthy nation**, itself already highly industrialized and the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world, sending out Volunteers to help with climate adaptation strategies” (Joy 2020).

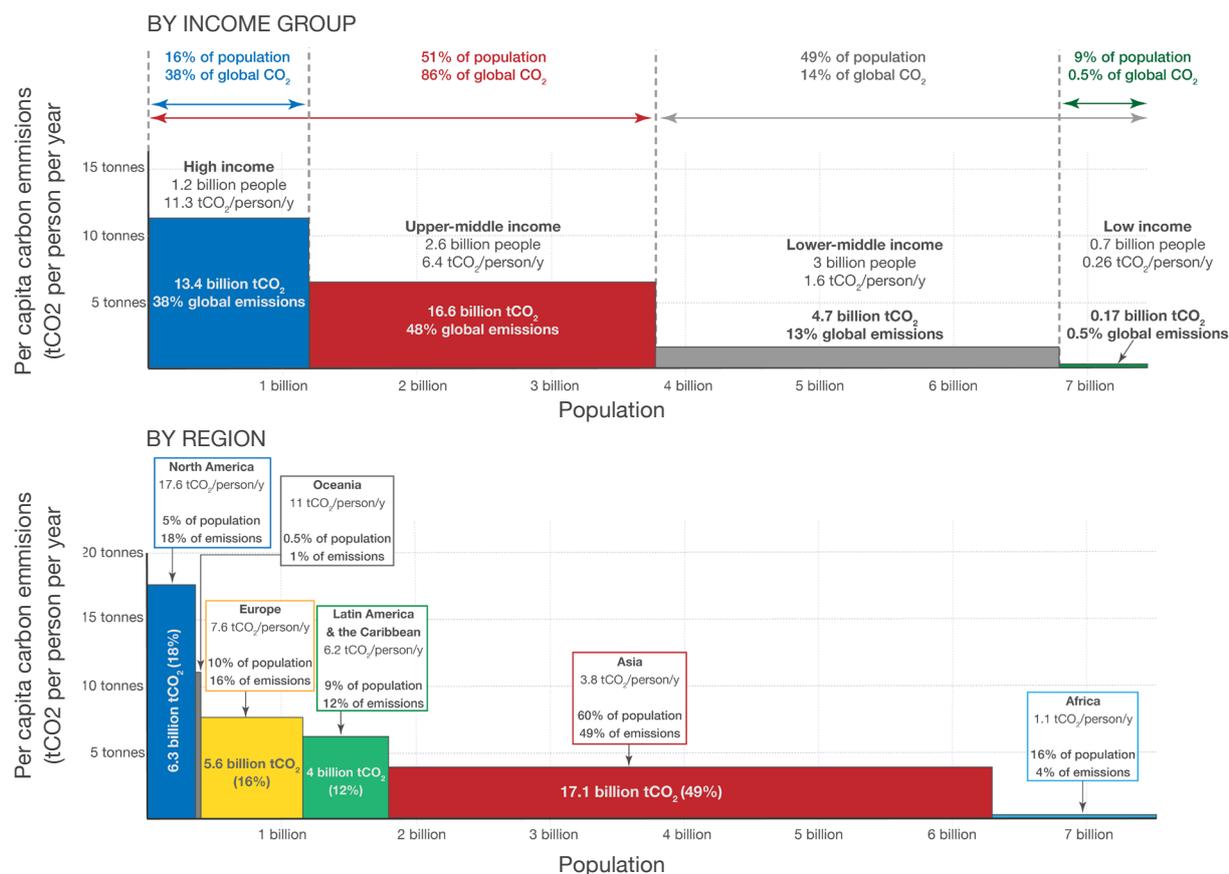
This contrast between the high income countries who are biggest contributors to climate change and those low income countries who most face their effects is illustrated starkly in two graphics as part of an Oxfam report for the Paris Climate summit (Gore 2015) shown earlier.

Figure 6: Global CO2 emissions by income and region

Global CO2 emissions by income and region

Breakdown of global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in 2016 by World Bank income group (top) and world region (bottom). This is based on average per capita emissions (y-axis) and population size (x-axis), with the area of the box representing total annual emissions in 2016.

- Emissions represent domestic production (not accounting for embedded emissions in traded products), and do not include cross-boundary emissions such as international aviation and shipping.
- Aggregation by income is based on the total emissions of countries within each of the World Bank's income groupings. It reflects average national incomes rather than the distribution of incomes within countries. E.g. 'Lower income' reflects the total emissions of all countries defined as low income, rather than the emissions of global individuals defined as low income. If defined on the basis of individuals (without country contexts), the global inequality would be even larger.



Source: Our World In Data based on data from the Global Carbon Project, UN Population Division (2018) & World Bank income groups. This is a visualisation from OurWorldInData.org, where you find data and research on how the world is changing. Licensed under CC-BY-SA by the authors Hannah Hitchie and Max Hoser.

What IVCOs are doing to address this contradiction and the emergence of social movements

Some IVCOs are exploring and implementing ways of embracing their strengths in terms of the strong adaptive focus of volunteering for development, whilst looking to reduce their own organisational contribution in causing climate change by reviewing and changing their practices. Additionally, there is also a recognition that a wider engagement is needed to focus on mitigation: influencing policy, campaigning and mobilisation to address the challenges of climate change and defining the role of the organisation within that. This talks to key elements of the significance of volunteer programmes in respect of active citizenship and the post-assignment activities of volunteers, but which may be peripheral to the central activity of volunteer assignments.

- **CECI** is a Canadian based IVCO, who is in the process of strengthening their focus on climate action. There is an explicit focus on gender and climate change, connection with advocacy networks in Canada and organisational commitment to carbon neutrality.¹⁵
- **France Volontaires (FV)** is a volunteer platform based in France that supports volunteering activity across the world. They are developing synergies in their programming models, emphasising building community awareness and resilience in respect of the challenges posed by climate change, locating the role of FV in a wider call for international mobilization. FV has a programme mainstreaming action on climate change and designs multi-stakeholder projects all around the world and increases volunteering opportunities at national and international level.¹⁶

A focus on carbon footprints and emissions leads to consideration of organisational practices, programme modelling and global education. It tends towards an advocacy or influencing agenda towards those in power, especially in the Global North. Practising the global learning and civil society strengthening IVCO models as part of an international movement including volunteer groups in the global South, can help tackle this and examples from the Volunteer Groups Alliance¹⁷, IAVE and national VIOs in the global South demonstrate this.

¹⁵ See Allum, Devereux, Lough and Tiessen, p.4 for more detail on CECI's approach

¹⁶ See Annex 4 for a more detailed account

¹⁷ The Volunteer Groups Alliance (VGA) was formed in 2012 to advance volunteering for Agenda 2030 with membership by Forum, the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE), UNV, the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) and many other VIOs including the World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA), the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGS), and United Way Worldwide (UWW).

How IVCOs engage – or do not engage – with climate change is brought sharply into question when considering the collective nature of **youth movements** on climate change. The emergence of volunteers as politically active is critical – whether as Extinction Rebellion in the UK or the Climate strikes that began amongst the youth of Sweden and became a global movement. From 20-27 September 2019 a record 7.6 million people were reported on the streets with over 6,000 actions recorded in 185 countries.

The impact of the climate strike movement has important lessons for IVCOs. AVI and CECI amongst other IVCOs actively encouraged staff and volunteers to participate in these marches as seen from their Twitter and Facebook accounts. But how broader social movements impact and inform what IVCOs do about climate action and climate justice is a deeper question.

McClosky (2019) suggests the global Climate Strike Movement Friday protests have inspired - but may also have inadvertently exposed the shortcomings of - international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). He says the movement has “exposed the lack of critical interrogation by INGOs of government and corporate inaction to reduce global warming, and shed light on the growing inertia of an INGO sector that trades in incremental change rather than systemic political and economic transformation”.

However, this raises the deeper question of tackling causes or symptoms of poverty and underdevelopment - are IVCOs ‘ladles in the global soup kitchen’ or advocates for global citizenship, justice and change? (Fowler 1995, Commins 1999).

McClosky suggests INGOs can learn four key elements from the young leaders of the climate action social movement like Greta Thunberg, to facilitate transformative rather than incremental change:

- Building large-scale popular mobilisation around the lived realities of climate change
- Speaking truth to power
- Resisting Co-optation or co-option and
- Practicing global learning.

These key elements, which arguably apply to IVCOs, speak to the power of collective over individual action. In relation to climate change and climate justice, they sit somewhat uneasily with the assignment of individual volunteers into adaptive programmes without a wider long-term organisational vision and practice. Within the international volunteer tradition, there is a good example of how climate change and climate justice have been placed at the core of the programme model and located in a wider approach to

mitigation. As we have seen, CCIVS shows how an organisational focus that embraces programme approaches, volunteer experience and internal practices can combine in a coherent approach to climate action and climate justice. But it also embraces volunteering as a social movement in contrast to models of individualised volunteer assignments.

Examples of linking climate change, climate action and climate justice can also be found in VIOs. The approach of Action Aid opens up the possibility for VIOs to consider a holistic approach to volunteer programming in respect of climate change, rather than compartmentalising interventions as essentially adaptation interventions in partner countries.

- **ActionAid** is an organisation whose central focus is not volunteering but where volunteering is part of its range of activities.¹⁸ It is an example of how a global NGO has defined issues of mitigation in terms of the responsibility of “wealthy nations” while connecting this to the adaptation of developing countries to build broad-based resilience in terms of coping and transition. This is enabled by locating their work in climate justice and defining a six-point plan which talks to both mitigation and adaptation.

IVCOs operate in different institutional frameworks: multi-lateral, governmental and NGOs. While these frameworks are likely to support volunteer models that address adaptive approaches to climate change, what ‘space’ do IVCOs have develop the kind of mitigation approaches indicated in the above discussion?

The dilemma for IVCOs was highlighted in 2007 and remains an issue at the forefront of addressing climate change at home and abroad:

“As IVCOs come to understand that **profound structural changes are needed globally, including policy change in their own countries**, they bump up against this reality. Policy advocacy and partisan politics are obviously different, but the distinctions can sometimes blur in practice. Organisations must be strategically astute as they plan their public mobilisation and advocacy work”

— **Christie 2007, p.7**

Other than groups like CIVICUS or Greenpeace with less strong constraints in funding sources, there is some evidence IVCOs have generally been less explicit about the climate movement’s second element of **‘speaking truth to power’** (Lough and Allum

¹⁸ ActionAid Hellas is a member of Forum. The information shown here derives both from their responses to the survey and from ActionAid sources and is detailed in Annex 2.

2013). Funding sources in particular can lead to co-option of volunteer groups or at the least for IVCOs a focus on work overseas because of funding from Foreign Affairs or aid budgets.¹⁹

Some ways forward for IVCOs

- A focus on carbon footprints and emissions leads to consideration of organisational practices, programme modelling and global education. It tends towards an advocacy or influencing agenda towards those in power, especially in the Global North.
- Practising global learning as part of an international movement including volunteer groups in the global South can help tackle this and examples from the Volunteer Groups Alliance²⁰, IAVE and national VIOs in the global South demonstrate this.
- Climate action may also offer new opportunities to develop a collective mentality within volunteer organisations. New ways of conceptualizing climate action through a collectivist lens include widening the focus to consider the values of extended family, community solidarity, mutuality, and human and nonhuman interrelationships for harmonious, peaceful, spiritual, and material coexistence. Concepts like Ahimsa (India), Buen Vivir (South America), Ubuntu (Africa), Hauora (New Zealand), or Shiawase and Ikigai (Japan) “enrich understandings of sustainable living as long-term collective action for sustainable development and reducing climate change” (Hayward and Roy 2019). The integration of these alternative, collective-oriented conceptual frameworks into volunteering programs (IDV) can change the way that IVCOs engage in climate action building on the 6 distinctive contributions highlighted earlier.
- There is also scope at organisational level, especially for the NGO IVCOs, by engaging in the various representational forums. For example, AVI is an active member of the Australian Council for International Development which has a strong policy advocating for action on climate change at home and abroad (Australian Council for International Development). The climate movement could also be enhanced by more concerted efforts to link international, national and local volunteer networks, centres and alumni fostered by groups from FORUM, to UNV, IAVE, and CCIVS through strategic alliances and networks like the Volunteer Groups Alliance.

¹⁹ The risks involved in ‘speaking truth to power’ for organisations may concern potential loss of funding sources, but individuals such as **environmental defenders** may pay the price of their voluntary action with their lives or wellbeing and this is why national and global alliances and solidarity are so crucial. Global Witness highlighted the deadly toll to environmental defenders of 197 deaths in 2017, rising fourfold since it was first compiled in 2002 (Global Witness 2018, Watts 2018).

²⁰ The Volunteer Groups Alliance (VGA) was formed in 2012 to advance volunteering for Agenda 2030 with membership by Forum, the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE), UNV, the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) and many other VIOs including the World Young Women’s Christian Association (World YWCA), the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGS), and United Way Worldwide (UWW).

COVID-19 and Climate Change

Inevitably, there is the necessary reflection on the impact of Covid-19. All of the above approaches and reviews were developed in a pre-Covid 19 era. The impact of the pandemic has highlighted the potential of on-line volunteering and the significance of community volunteering. Both of these developments are clearly relevant to climate change and climate justice. On-line volunteering has the potential to widen the participation of volunteering outside of their immediate environment without generating the carbon emissions associated with domestic and international travel. Community volunteering emphasises building capacity within the locality – the ‘first responders’ to climate change issues.

The 2020 global pandemic is a moment to pause and reflect on traditional practices and the impacts of international volunteering models that have relied on emission-heavy practices involving long-haul flights around the world. Taking COVID 19 and Climate Change together implies a major rethinking of the traditional model of volunteering for development and the role of IVCOs in this new situation. In this moment of reflection there is an opportunity to consider the role that climate change social movements play in fostering new ways of building understanding on climate change and the diverse actors that can contribute in different yet complementary ways to climate action.

COVID 19 means IVCO’s everywhere are looking to scale up what volunteers can strategically contribute to volunteering for development without travel. E-volunteering to support Southern partners is being scaled up and providing important continuity to work. Strategically this can be complemented and accelerated by activities to work on promoting and accelerating climate mitigation action in high greenhouse emitting countries. This is a key leverage point for IVCOs that draws on the latent power of hundreds of thousands of returned volunteers who have seen with their own eyes the impact of climate change in the South.

Alternative models of conceptualizing collective action around climate change shed light on the prospects for people to people solidarity, justice and exchange that mobilise international and national volunteering for transformative and persuasive action that tackles the causes as well as symptoms of climate change. This paper is a ‘wake-up call’ for scaled up action particularly on causes to help achieve the decisive action the IPCC have flagged is needed by 2030 to keep temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees.

Concluding points for discussion

This concluding section summarises the key points in this paper and identifies recommendations specifically related to IVCOs for their consideration in relation to the sub-themes of the IVCO 2020 conference.

Summary of Key Points

- Climate action is more pressing than ever and IVCOs have a distinctive advantage in this area because of their work with volunteers and returned volunteers in North and South. The expansion of climate change-related impacts and challenges around the world, combined with insufficient mitigation and adaptation strategies, requires innovative models, conceptual frameworks, policies and practices.
- Climate justice is not a programme area and it is not a trade off with other development activities but the context in which they can be accelerated. For example, sustainable livelihoods programmes can be implemented in ways that simultaneously tackle climate change.
- The new UNV accelerator tool kit offers significant tools in this respect to demonstrate the distinctive contribution of volunteering to simultaneously tackle inequality and climate change. The tool kit should be used to document and consolidate how volunteering is a ‘catalytic policy and programme area that can trigger positive multiplier effects across SDGs and targets’ from education and health to decent work, gender, inequality and climate action.

Recommendations

This section addresses recommendations for discussion at IVCO 2020 based on the different conference thematic areas and for future research.

1.1.1 Advocacy and Awareness

- Increased actions that build on effective practices found in the case studies and surveys. “The basis upon which this action is constructed and prioritised cannot ignore climate justice.” This should form a renewed focus on the power of global citizenship as part of volunteer models including prior, during and post volunteer service.
- Revisiting principles of best practice, building on ideas of collective action and solidarity – “how people construct an understanding of climate change, how they build an awareness of its impact on planetary life.” This can draw upon cultural traditions and practice in sustainable lifestyles from the Global South as well as innovations in the Global North.

1.1.2 Adaptation and Resilience

- Climate action must begin with promoting the voice of marginalised communities who are coping with - and adapting to - the impacts of climate change, and the global connections that perpetuate and exacerbate climate -induced inequalities. This includes promoting the voice of Pacific Island communities seeking to show the global community the impact of its inaction through UNFCCC and other international Fora. Efforts to mitigate climate change require careful attention to the diverse ways it impacts different people within and between communities.
- A commitment to intersectional approaches to climate action (including programming that supports the courageous action and resilience of diverse marginalized groups: like women, children, people with disabilities, refugees/displaced persons, minority ethnic groups, and marginalized communities who face the biggest impacts of climate change).

1.1.3 Capacity Building

- Capacity Building of partners and communities in the Global South, while having clear importance, needs to start from a vision of climate justice and needs to go beyond adaptive approaches.
- A recognition that capacity building needs to happen universally, so communities and individuals globally understand their contributions and impacts on both climate problems and solutions. This requires active work on SDG target 4.7 to ensure 'all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development'.

1.1.4 Policies and Systems

- Volunteer Networks like Forum, IAVE, CCIVS and others have a key leadership role in encouraging and supporting members in their programmatic and mobilisation activities and influencing key decision makers by ‘speaking truth to power.’
- Supporting and making effective use of the VGA as an alliance to actively promote recognition of the crosscutting role of volunteering in climate change and climate justice in global, regional and decision-making fora particularly through national SDG reporting mechanisms (like Voluntary National Reviews to the HLPF)
- Ensuring the global standards for volunteering embrace a global strategy for climate justice and include commitments and reporting on climate action in the global North²¹

1.1.5 Future Research

- Considerations related to **gender inequality, the gender division of labour and indigenous people** highlight the often-times disproportionate impact of climate change on women and marginalized groups. Growing literature also indicates the special voluntary contributions that marginalised groups make to tackling climate change in direct and indirect ways (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2006, Wemlinger and Berlan 2016, Nyantakyi-Frimpong 2019, Sadasivam 2020). Reviewing the area of the impact of climate change on marginalised groups predominantly the focus of volunteer involving organisations appears to be on adaptation, although there are areas of dual focus and on occasions just on mitigation. However, the issue of gender, volunteering and climate change appears to be a gap in the literature and important for future research.

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²¹ Since 2018 Forum has put significant effort into developing a Volunteering Standard. The Volunteering Standard does not explicitly mention climate change, though it does recommend “that IVCO projects **in the South** will deliver development impact, long-term sustainability and environmental protection” (International Forum for Volunteering in Development 2019). Building on some of the IVCO commitments to a global strategy for climate justice (examples of Canada and Australia noted above), IVCOs must broaden their Volunteering Standard to include stronger global dimensions that also require commitments to climate action in the North as pointed out in the 2010 Forum discussion paper

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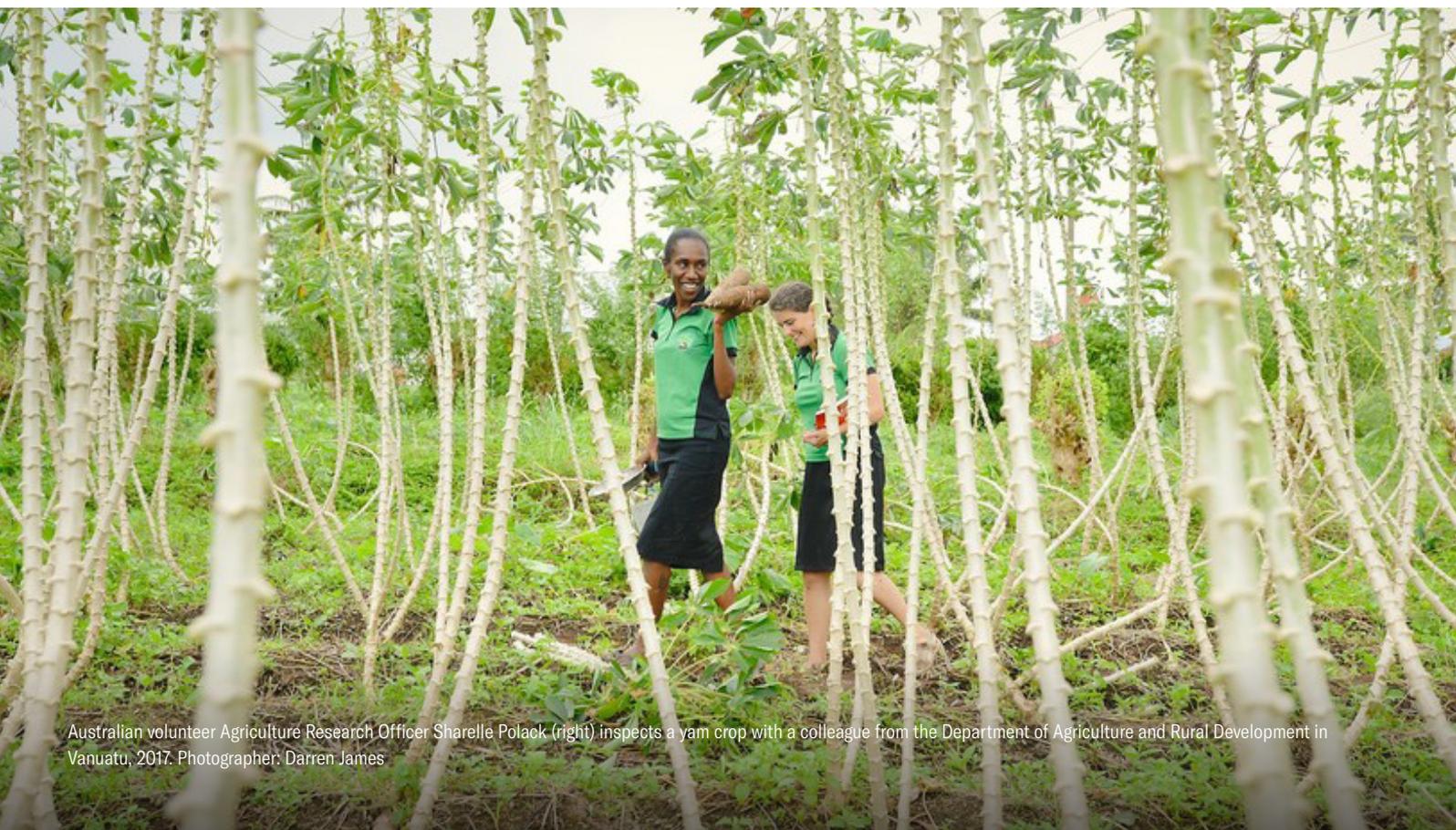
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Australian volunteer Agriculture Research Officer Sharelle Polack (right) inspects a yam crop with a colleague from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Vanuatu, 2017. Photographer: Darren James

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Annex 1: Case Study: The Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS)

CCIVS is a non-governmental, non-profit making international organization (INGO) working for the development and coordination of voluntary service worldwide. The scale of activity involves in excess of 30,000 volunteers each year embracing nearly 200 member organisations. CCIVS is in official partnership with UNESCO.

CCIVS' main focus is the quest to achieve change in the minds of men and women by bringing together people of different backgrounds. It supports and develops projects based on the idea that working together on a concrete task is the most effective way of creating international friendship and understanding.

IVS for Climate Justice is a worldwide campaign taking place in over 100 countries, coordinated by CCIVS, bringing together the activities of six International Voluntary Service networks, CCIVS, Service Civil international (SCI), The International Building Organisation (IBO), Alliance of European Voluntary Service organisations, Network for Voluntary Development Asia (NVDA) and the Network of African Voluntary Organisations (NAVO). It engages volunteers with local communities to work on grassroots projects that combine manual work and awareness raising actions. These address issues such as climate change, carbon offset, environmental sustainability, protection of ecosystems, water and soil management and conservation.

CCIVS sets out a vision of climate justice that relates to the inequality in who causes climate change and how is affected by it

“As a matter of principle, climate change is a global challenge affecting the entire world and humanity as a whole. At a closer look, however, people most responsible for anthropogenic climate change and those most affected by its consequences differ. Geographical location, economic status as well as means to act may determine the vulnerability of individuals living today. Apart from that, scientists predict increasingly severe consequences of climate change for generations yet to come. The concept of climate justice addresses this unequal allocation of benefits and burdens by relating climate change to matters of social justice and human rights.” (CCIVS 2020)

How CCIVS members address this relates to their historic workcamp programme model – people working alongside each other will share and build understanding and solidarity, with the focus on climate change an essential building block for a sustainable society in the future. 38.6% of CCIVS projects focus on Climate Justice representing the participation of over 11000 volunteers each year.

This is underpinned by a programme of learning, with e-learning courses on areas such as bioconstruction and agriculture available to CCIVS members, supplementing residentials and workshops.

The Stop Climate Change Project which started in 2016 attempted to address both organisational practice and programme activity. The aims of this pilot project were to: reduce carbon emission in IVS workcamps; raise awareness of youth and local communities about the importance of a sustainable lifestyle; empower IVS associations in adopting sustainable policies and practices.

Bioconstruction

The project seeks to provide new skills and revive traditional techniques in the field of environment and sustainability, while taking into account the ways in which the network can address poverty reduction and health promotion. It uses the pre-existing campaign IVS for Climate Justice, established in 2016 as a banner to highlight the actions of different IVS networks on environmental sustainability and to emphasize the contribution of IVS projects to the achievement of the SDGs.

Objectives

To develop IVS organisations' youth workers and trainers' capacity of acting as multipliers in their regions and in their organisations

To strengthen participation in the global IVS network and connection between organisations who may also make part of different networks who would not normally work together (CCIVS acting as bridge between these networks) and with external stakeholders

To revalorise traditional / alternative farming and construction techniques

To raise awareness about the effects of unsustainable food production and housing and their contribution to Climate Change

Source: CCIVS in Action: <https://ccivs.org/ccivs-in-action/ccivs-campaigns/ivs-for-climate-justice-campaign/projects/dont-just-say-it-do-it-ccivs/publications/>

The outcome has seen the development of sustainability policies and practices applying to both workcamp activities and organisational practice. CCIVS members have focused on areas such as reducing travel; reduced printing and paper usage; ecologically appropriate promotions; biodegradable/recyclable training materials; and carbon offsetting. These approaches are found in the workcamp model, e.g. living without meat or electricity.²² In 2018, CCIVS launched a campaign to encourage volunteers to join up for carbon offsetting with a practical guide on what to do.²³

For more information: <https://ccivs.org/>

²² See <https://ccivs.org/resources/ccivs-sustainability-policy/>

²³ See <https://ccivs.org/ccivs-in-action/ccivs-campaigns/ivs-for-climate-justice-campaign/projects/ivs-carbon-offset-for-2017-nvda-nice-and-ccivs/>

Annex 2: Case Study: ActionAid brings together mitigation and adaptation within a framework of climate justice

“We focus on climate justice and equity, recognising the responsibility of wealthy countries to lead rapid climate action, and supporting developing countries to cope with climate impacts and transition to greener pathways. Working with vulnerable people and communities around the world, we help them to make their livelihoods, food, homes and safety more resilient to climate change.”

Source: ActionAid website 6 June 2020

The ActionAid six-point plan:

“Support communities’ ability to adapt to climate change by strengthening national plans and processes

Protect and financially support people facing climate induced losses, and people who are forced to migrate due to climate change

Pressure wealthy countries to support initiatives like the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to enable climate action and adaptation in poorer countries

Advocate for system change and scale up successful local solutions

Challenge false solutions such as “Climate Smart Agriculture”, and promote real solutions such as agroecology

Ensure that land-based solutions respect human rights and food security”

The linkage is developed in respect of specific events, such as how drought, cyclones and flooding have impacted in southern Africa and are linked to the failure of the Madrid Climate Change conference (COP 25).²⁴ COVID 19 is also linked to climate change in its impact on climate refugees

²⁴ Chikondi Chabvuta, ActionAid’s regional humanitarian adviser for Southern Africa.
Source: ActionAid website 5 June 2020

“COVID-19 has exposed how poorly migrant workers are treated, as overnight in Bangladesh factories were shutdown leaving garment workers with no way to earn a living. In India, tens of thousands of workers with no job security left cities to walk hundreds of kilometres back to their villages.

“This pandemic must act as a wake-up call to governments about the need for social protection measures to ensure that climate migrants get basic services like food, education, shelter and security. It is also an opportunity to ensure that supporting farmers and communities to become more resilient to climate change is built into long term response plans.”²⁵

There is a recognition of climate change as a feminist issue and this is not simply located as something that has a disproportionate impact on women but connected to the position women hold in different societies. This embraces the issues of power, access, roles and gender-based violence alongside the differential poverty impact on women.²⁶

How this translates into the activities of ActionAid on a day to day basis is evidenced in the response from ActionAid Hellas to the accompanying survey to the report.

“ActionAid Hellas through various educational programs has been sensitizing and mobilizing students and youth as well as the educational community in general on climate change. Through our programs we try to develop awareness and critical understanding of climate change as one of the biggest challenges in the globalized world, its root causes and its impact. Moreover, with the belief that young people have tremendous potential to be both present and future drivers of sustainable development, since 2017 we have been implementing in partnership with schools mobilization and sensitization activities on SDGs and in particular around Sustainable Cities , Goal 11 and Climate change, Goal 13.

²⁵ Harjeet Singh ActionAid’s global lead on climate change quoted in “Covid-19 crisis shows South Asia id unprepared to protect climate migrants’ 6 May 2020. Source: ActionAid website. Also see Climate migrants pushed to the brink published by ActionAid.

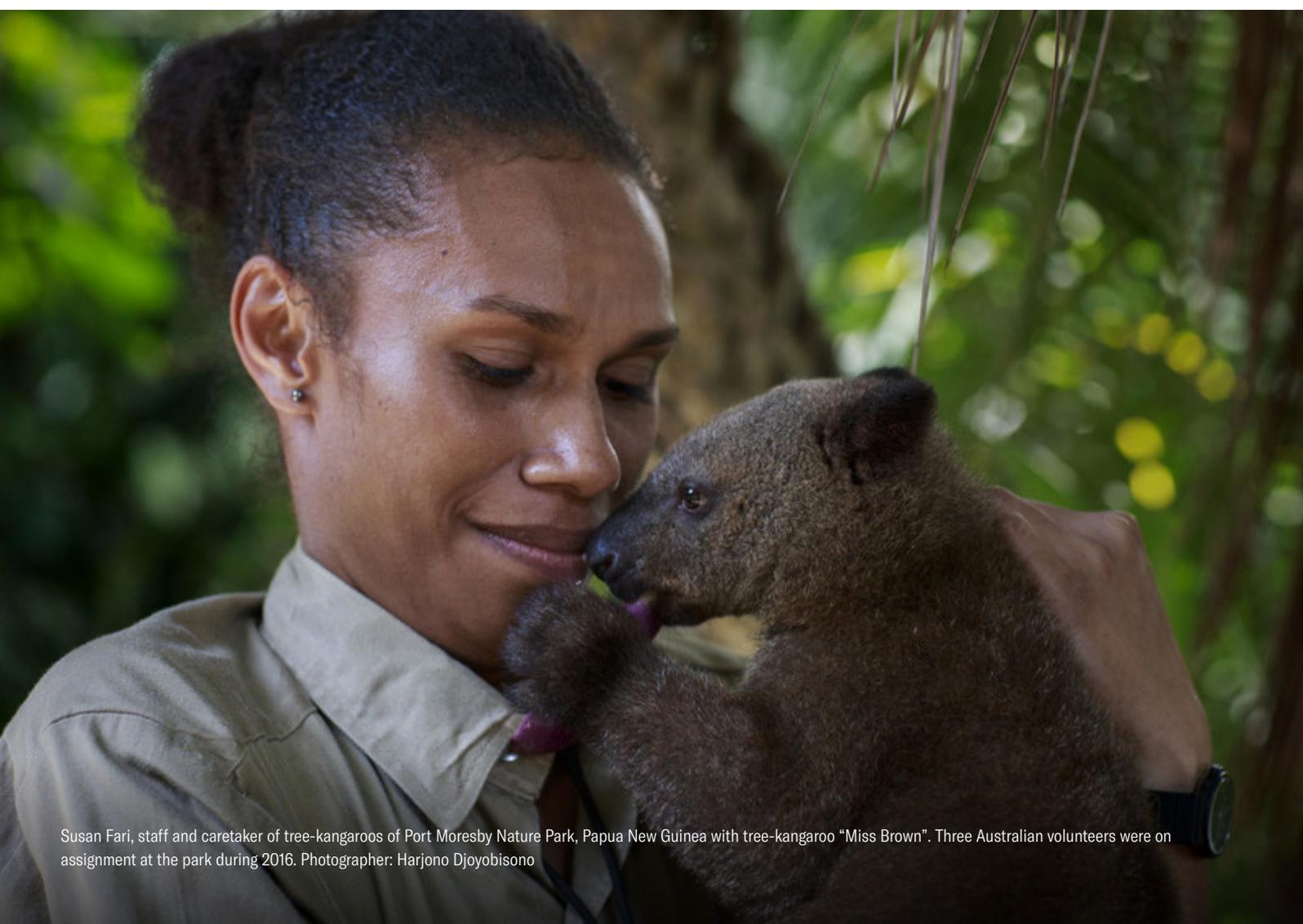
²⁶ ‘Climate Change is a feminist Issue’ ActionAid website 26 December 2019 see <https://www.actionaid.org.uk/blog/news/2019/12/26/climate-change-is-a-feminist-issue>

In particular ActionAid Hellas together with 18 European partners have been implementing the project Walk the Global Walk which aims to serve as an initial introduction to students on global awareness and active citizenship based on SDG and take action locally to impact communities both locally and around the globe. In 2019 we engaged more than 500 schools and 20.000 students where they united their voices and recommendations for a more sustainable world and raised the issue of Climate change.”

This approach opens up the possibility for VIOs to consider a holistic approach to volunteer programming in respect of climate change, rather than compartmentalising interventions as essentially adaptation interventions in partner countries.

For further information

<https://www.actionaid.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/emergencies-disasters-humanitarian-response/climate-change>



Susan Fari, staff and caretaker of tree-kangaroos of Port Moresby Nature Park, Papua New Guinea with tree-kangaroo “Miss Brown”. Three Australian volunteers were on assignment at the park during 2016. Photographer: Harjono Djoyobisono

Annex 3: Case Study: IFRC: From disaster risk reduction and response to climate change mitigation and adaptation

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has a long history of promoting, organising and coordinating volunteer engagement related to **disaster risk response and reduction** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2009). IFRC expressed particular concern about vulnerabilities because of global inequalities given a recognition that an estimated “97 per cent of all people killed by natural disasters each year occur in developing countries”(International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2012).

Highlighting an increasing risk of disasters from Climate Change, it has also put climate change mitigation and adaptation²⁷ on the agenda since its 2007 international Congress (International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 2015). IFRC reported that in 2018, its network invested 207 million Swiss francs on DRR and climate adaptation projects, which reached 52 million people in 160 countries – and 72% of those were regarded as ‘climate-smart’- (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2020).

IFRC’s Climate-smart disaster risk reduction program has four-part priority plan to 1) promote and enhance approaches and tools 2) leverage new technologies 3) catalyse and capitalize on IFRC’s network and volunteer base to scale up and 4) strengthen partnerships and advocacy. (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2020).

In 2018 as part of its 2030 strategy IFRC highlighted Climate Change as at the top of five global challenges. This is reflected in the box below from its Strategy 2030 Platform for Change-Global reach Local action (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2018).

²⁷ Mitigation – involves reducing the flow of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, either by reducing sources of these gases (for example, the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, heat or transport) or enhancing the “sinks” that accumulate and store these gases (such as the oceans, forests and soil). Adaptation – adapting to life in a changing climate – involves adjusting to actual or expected future climate. (<https://climate.nasa.gov/solutions/adaptation-mitigation/>)

Global challenge 1: Climate and environmental crises

The climate crisis and environmental degradation are significant risks to humanity. Changes to our climate and environment are already contributing to an increase in the frequency, intensity and unpredictability of severe weather events, multiplying health effects, and the decline of biodiversity.

Without action on both climate and environmental degradation, their impacts will place increasing pressure on scarce natural resources, including food, water and clean air. These intersecting issues are increasing exposure and vulnerability; raising climate-related risks in cities and in regions already suffering from violent conflict, with serious consequences for the livelihoods, mental health and psychosocial well-being of the people who are affected.

— IFRC, 2018

IFRC has highlighted the interconnected nature of current global problems recognising “the impacts of the climate crisis as a growing reality for millions of people as well as new and unexpected health threats that are contributing to driving migration and displacement at a time when compassion for people on the move is at an all-time low”. They have also recognised the complex political dynamics and power struggles with “dramatic shifts in systemic power, low levels of trust in institutions, the growth of movements driving their own social change, and a demand from previously marginalised people to be seen, heard and included”. (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2018)

IFRC strategic goals are rooted in its Fundamental Principles and it has committed to major global humanitarian and development frameworks including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Paris Agreement for Climate Change, alongside other major compacts and alliances where they make clear and direct contributions (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2018).

Ambitions to address the Climate Crisis

Through our network of 192 National Societies, 165,000 local branches and 14 million volunteers, we will make our work climate-smart 2 and increase our climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction efforts, working with communities on the frontlines of climate change. We will consider climate risks in all we do and anticipate extreme weather events ahead of their impact. And we will reduce our own environmental footprint, greening our operations and pursuing nature- and ecosystem-based solutions. We also call on the world's citizens, governments and companies to do their part to reduce emissions but also to resolutely address the rising risks already facing the most vulnerable.

— **IFRC, 2020**

In 2020 IFRC made clear its ambitions for action on Climate change committing to reduce their own environmental footprint, green their own operations and pursue nature- and ecosystem-based solutions as can be seen in the box below. (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2020). As part of improving their own operation IFRC also has developed and implemented a climate change e learning platform for staff and volunteers. The program finishes with a module on ‘how staff and volunteers can contribute to addressing both the root causes of climate change (mitigation) and the consequences of climate change (adaptation)’ (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2016).

Annex 4: Case Study: France Volontaires – developing awareness, building resilience and policy coherence

France Volontaires (FV) is a volunteer platform based in France that supports volunteering activity across the world. Their response to the survey indicates how they are developing synergies in their programming models, emphasising building community awareness and resilience in respect of the challenges posed by climate change, locating the role of FV in a wider call for international mobilization.

“Facing climate change, which affects human activities and lives, biodiversity and natural resources, the adaptation of our territory and the planet has become a major issue that calls for national and international mobilization.

FV facilitates the combination of climate policies with youth policies in order to amplify the impact of the actions undertaken. The local, national and international volunteers mobilized, alongside FV and its partners, are facilitators of dialogue. They contribute to amplifying and disseminating innovations and local solutions in various fields for the resilience of vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

Since 2016, FV has been designing and implementing a policy on corporate social responsibility, including a strong environmental dimension. FV has a programme mainstreaming action on climate change. Within this programme, FV designs multi-stakeholder projects all around the world and increases volunteering opportunities at national and international level.

The TERO project aims to strengthen the resilience of communities to climate change through the involvement of young local volunteers and the accompaniment of local organizations, committed to the preservation of oases, towards a better mobilization of young people in their structures in Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The capacities of partner organizations in North Africa has been strengthened regarding the involvement of volunteers in their activities and governance. Synergies have been created with youth and volunteer organizations in order to identify volunteers, who were trained on disaster risk reduction and who have then designed risk reduction plans within a campus hold in Tunisia and raised awareness of communities.

FV is also running the Forests project, which focuses on having international and national volunteers supporting communities depending on forests. It is about to deploy 27 European volunteers to develop citizen engagement in reducing the vulnerability of communities living in forest areas and to strengthen their resilience.

- First, in order to better understand the challenges that forest-dependent people are and will be facing, some of the volunteers deployed will map existing initiatives and their needs and to create a networking space between stakeholders in each country. This work will highlight the current and future sources of vulnerability of these communities.
- Then, these same volunteers will set up spaces (seminars) for local stakeholders to express themselves on the threats they face and plan together intervention strategies based on ecosystem dynamics and vulnerability reduction. Disseminating information, creating social links and helping local populations to set up projects complementary to awareness raising actions are the key actions that will be undertaken to reduce vulnerability and strengthen the resilience capacities of these populations.
- Some volunteers will focus on activities aimed at attracting the attention of young people, involving them more actively in projects defending the rights of communities living in forest areas. Thanks to modern campaigns and tools developed by the volunteers, partners will be able to meet and inform young people about these issues with adequate and effective communication.

In our daily work, and through our office management and CSR policy, we are regularly reassessing our practices to make them more respectful of the environment as possible (recycling, choice of sustainable office supplies, etc). FV chooses its suppliers according to very strict criteria, based on environmental and social impact and put in place a sorting system and limits the consumption of consumables. FV has also started to measure its carbon impact.