VOLUNTEERING FOR INCLUSION

IN THIS ISSUE:

Education for Rohingya refugees
EVPs to empower girls
Inclusivity for the elderly
Integration of migrants

...AND MORE!
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Volunteering for Inclusion

By Nichole Cirillo, Executive Director, IAVE

Shortly after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, I was dispatched by the organization for whom I worked to help our on-the-ground partners begin the recovery process. My co-workers and I made three initial trips to the area, meeting with partners to hear their needs. The list was long, dire and competing: hunger, access to water, safety of women and girls, and medical care. Further, there was depression, anxiety, and a sense of hopelessness.

Listening to these needs was the first step in navigating a response. It was a central tenet of the organization, and a belief I hold to this day, that service is at its best when it is done using an Eye to Eye Partnership model, one that insists we don’t act as saviors, but as facilitators of our partners’ goals. Taking their lead was not always easy – one of the things they wanted was a soccer field which didn’t seem like a priority to me. More on that later. But to what they knew to be the most effective means to address their needs, we added our access to social and financial capital and together, quickly established programs to provide medical assistance and short-term housing.

We then looked at longer term ideas to help our partners lift themselves out of poverty, using our expertise to concretize what was essentially their idea, their dream. They saw an opportunity to establish not just secure lives, but sovereign ones. Translating this vision to donors, I secured funding for an agricultural cooperative for over 30 families.

And that soccer field? It turned out to be a gathering place, where families connected but also resolved differences. I now know that this is what true resilience looks like – solutions that work for the people who use them. And that this would not have been possible without the deep and authentic inclusion of those we were working with.

“If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together,” says the famed Australian artist Lilla Watson. And as you will read in the articles in this edition of Volunteering Together, this call to action has been placed at the center of their volunteering programs, resulting in service that transforms communities.

At IAVE, as we approach our 50th year, we will continue to champion an inclusive approach to volunteering. Through our National Leadership Network, Global Friends and Advocacy efforts, and with our Global Corporate Volunteering Council, we will help lead, grow and celebrate service that is accessible to all, and of, for and with the communities we serve.

I now know that this is what true resilience looks like – solutions that work for the people who use them.
HOW VOLUNTEERS ARE SUPPORTING EDUCATION FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEE CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH

By Heather Alcock, VSO International, UK
People in developing countries have the ability, courage and desire to help themselves. That’s why, at VSO, we use a volunteering for development approach that puts the most marginalised people first. We focus on those who are traditionally left out in society – people who are poor, disabled, ill, female, young, gay. These people are not passive recipients of aid so we don’t call them ‘beneficiaries’. They are the ‘primary actors’ at the heart of our development approach. They are closely involved in every aspect of our programme design and delivery, and are critical to ensuring long-lasting change.

Education is a core part of VSO’s programme work, and VSO believes that education should be a right for all children, no matter where they come from.
In Cox’s Bazaar in Bangladesh, VSO has been supporting over 6,600 Rohingya refugee children aged 3-14 years old. Many of these children have experienced violence and ongoing trauma in some of the most crucial years of their lives. Most still lack safe spaces to learn and play. Over the past year, VSO has rolled out an early childhood care and education in emergencies programme. This is the only early childhood education programme happening at Cox’s Bazar refugee camp.

International volunteer Ann Wambui from Kenya has brought her expertise in early years ‘education to train teachers across the camp. Ann works alongside two national professional volunteers, community volunteers and a set of project staff to develop 50 Rohingya older girls and young women as ‘teachers’ (‘Big Sisters’) who voluntarily deliver early childhood education to children in the refugee tents they call home.

Community volunteers – with their unique knowledge of the community and cultural context – play an important part in working with families and the community to raise awareness about the value of both education and sexual and reproductive health and rights. They develop lesson plans with the Big Sister mentors and maintain regular communication with the Rohingya leaders known as ‘Majhi’.

Relationships between the different volunteers are critical for the success of the project, and a recent evaluation of the project shows how, by working together, the volunteers are helping to improve parental engagement in their children’s education. Recent focus groups with the parents found very high levels of satisfaction with the quality of education, and they are observing changes in their children’s ability to communicate and improve their basic skills.

Ann speaks about how the process has made a difference to the lives of children. “Initially the children were fearful or anxious when we interacted with them. Our home visits were characterised by screams. The children were always distracted, and would hold on tight to their mothers and big sisters. Overcoming trauma takes time. However, these children have the capacity to learn like any other child. It’s important that children who’ve experienced something so traumatic feel safe, secure and have their basic needs met. It feels great to see these vulnerable children developing trust and confidence in people again”
CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING ADDS IMPACT IN VENEZUELA

By Carlos Eduardo Dini Uzcategui, Executive Director, Dividendo Voluntario para la Comunidad A.C.

In recent years, the Venezuela has been hit by one of the largest economic crises in its history. Figures such as those of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean indicate that in 2018 the Venezuelan GDP fell for the fifth consecutive year, placing the country’s economy in a cumulative contraction of almost 50%, with respect to the GDP of 2013. This crisis has increased the number of vulnerable families, with children being the most affected by the current situation in the country. But to say that the panorama is complex, without highlighting the efforts of the different actors that are dedicated every day to doing great things to cause a great change, is a mistake.

Since 1964, Dividendo Voluntario para la Comunidad (DVC) has served as a connector between the efforts of private initiatives. DVC helps companies add value to their social responsibility initiatives by providing the means to form cooperative projects with one another. These companies target different activities and different areas of focus. Through partnership with one another they generate greater impact.

In 2018, DVC, together with its member companies, developed the Nutrition for Early Childhood Program, seeking to attack the serious food crisis that children experience in the most vulnerable communities of Venezuela. DVC’s feeding program provides breakfast and a mid-morning snacks to preschoolers in the community. This program aims to transform children’s nutrition, as well as their eating habits at home and at school. The program promotes healthy eating by providing training on good cooking practices, food handling and hygiene. The aim is to help the develop skills that will result in healthier eating, creating a mechanism that attacks the state of food insecurity and at the same time mitigating malnutrition in the most vulnerable communities.

Currently, DVC is in charge of organizing the corporate volunteer activities of its member companies, ensuring that the program is integrated properly in the community and creating greater impact. The companies practice skills-based volunteering, by providing their skill sets and knowledge in the communities where DVC works. This includes training in personal finance, stress management, comprehensive education and wellness. They provide workshops against child violence and training for female entrepreneurs.

Don Bosco Community Center, in the Chapellín neighborhood of Caracas, is a great example of the work that we do. For over a year, the center, which serves as a preschool for the children in the community, has benefited from
HEALTH

Number of children impacted by the program

6,110

- Children evaluated and diagnosed nutritionally
- Children served in Zulia State
- Children & representatives dewormed in CENDISOL (Zulia State)

NUTRITION

6,700

Children received food through the feeding program

416,800

Servings served
(September 2019-November 2019)
the nutrition program. In addition to providing food for the children, DVC nutritionists also provide training on proper nutrition to the mothers. Aside from nutrition, other focus areas. Companies such as KPMG, Fundación Empresas Polar and Mercado Libre provide entrepreneurship workshops to the community. Workshops about gender inclusion are held by social development organizations like CECODAP, while first aid training is given by volunteers from specialist companies like Venemergencia. Additionally, Procter & Gamble is working to improve water purification in the community and Mercantil Seguros is assisting in improving policies to improve access to healthcare. With the combined efforts of DVC and our member companies, we have developed a comprehensive project, targeting various aspects of the community. This reiterates the idea that with the help of companies that are committed to working in partnership with one another and the nonprofit sector, it is possible to achieve greater impact.

DVC operates in 38 centers throughout 11 states in Venezuela, impacting a great number of communities in the country. It is clear that for DVC and its member companies, there is a new way of volunteering and exercising corporate social responsibility in Venezuela. By forming alliances with one another, we can widen our impact and positively affect the lives of many more individuals in our communities. It also allows companies and their volunteers to be part of a macro project, providing a greater sense of fulfillment in the work that they do.
EMPLOYEES VOLUNTEER TO HELP GIRLS TAKE OVER!

By Catalina Fischer, Plan International USA
Alisha is studying political science and human rights at Stanford University. But this past October, instead of taking notes in a lecture hall, she spent a day doing something very different: taking over as a major television executive.

Alisha is a member of the Youth Advisory Board for Plan International USA (Plan), a non-profit that advances children’s rights and equality for girls. Each year, in celebration of International Day of the Girl on October 11, Plan organizes “takeovers” for girls like Alisha to spend a day in positions of power. The experience gives young women the chance to consider new leadership roles and gives companies the opportunity to engage employees in support for gender equality in the workplace. In addition to coordinating more than 1,000 takeovers for girls around the world, Plan International also sparked conversations about how to challenge traditional gender roles and norms.

Alisha led and attended meetings with executive producers and writers; she even got to provide input on scripts and explore character development. She said that one of the most memorable experiences was learning about showing diversity both on the screen and behind the camera.

"[This experience] opened my eyes to the critical role that the media can play in creating and driving social change, as well as the need for diverse perspectives in the production phase," Alisha said. "Along with putting more strong female protagonists on-screen, the media industry must recognize the importance
of having women in its executive positions, because a diverse team has a uniquely powerful ability to portray character experiences and reach a much wider audience."

Over the years, volunteers from a variety of companies have enjoyed stepping up to support girls through Plan Takeovers. We leverage our U.S. network of young advocates and match them with companies based on opportunities, skills, and interest to create meaningful experiences on both sides. Hosting a takeover goes beyond providing shadowing or mentorship; we work with companies to identify leaders and create a compelling day to educate and engage both the girl taking over and employees throughout the office. In this way, participating companies are helping to empower girls, inspire them to envision new career paths, and reveal their own potential – all while reinforcing the company’s values and commitment to gender equality.

Takeovers in the United States also reflect Plan’s global work to promote gender equity. In more than 50 countries around the world, Plan is attacking some of the biggest obstacles holding girls and boys back, including child marriage, human trafficking, and generational poverty.

You can be a part of the Plan, too! For information on how you can host a takeover for International Day of the Girl at your company, please contact Catalina Fischer, Corporate Partnerships Manager, at Catalina.Fischer@PlanUSA.org.
VOLUNTEERING FOR AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE IN THE UAE

By Emirates Foundation, UAE
Volunteering and civic engagement are at the heart of the UAE’s social and cultural fabric. They are ingrained in the nation’s institutions and organizations, in recognition of their role in building strong communities and supporting sustainable development.

These values have formed the mission and programs of the Emirates Foundation, which has successfully built a strong program portfolio using a youth development model since its establishment in 2005. The Foundation applies a research-driven ‘market-based’ approach to youth development and responds to targeted needs and challenges of youth between the ages of 15 and 35 years with solutions within a focused operational portfolio.
Volunteering Programs

Emirates Foundation has successfully created a model of creating volunteering impact at scale and in setting the standards and best practices for the region to follow through its Takatof program, Sanid program and online platform, www.volunteers.ae.

Fostering Tolerance

Through its volunteering programs, the Foundation has been successful in incorporating and connecting volunteers within various organizations, events, people of determination, and all United Arab Emirates (UAE) residents. This comprehensive outlook on volunteering has successfully aligned with the UAE’s 2019 Year of Tolerance which highlights the UAE as a global centre for tolerance, and entrenches the values of tolerance, dialogue, coexistence and openness to all cultures. Volunteers of all cultures and backgrounds work together within volunteering projects harmoniously.

Volunteers.ae

At the Emirates Foundation, social responsibility starts with volunteering, with an aim to nurture a shared spirit of giving and respect within the community, honoring the legacy of the UAE’s founding father, His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. The Emirates Foundation has developed and manages the largest nation-wide Volunteering Platform, www.volunteers.ae, under the auspices of the UAE Ministry of Community Development and which has attracted over 400,000+ volunteers of all nationalities and cultures and 450+ organizations from all sectors, engaging in diverse and inclusive volunteering activities across the nation.
Takatof Volunteering Program

Through Takatof, launched in 2007, the Emirates Foundation fosters a culture of volunteering amongst all UAE residents, building their skills, confidence and revealing a sense of purpose towards specialized volunteering through a spirit of inclusion, tolerance and respect towards each other. Takatof also provides Emirati youth the opportunity to volunteer outside the UAE through its Takatof International Volunteer Project.

Sanid Volunteering Program

Emirates Foundation’s Sanid program, a robust emergency response volunteer program, was launched in 2009 and has since empowered thousands of volunteers across the UAE to participate in giving back to the UAE community. Sanid volunteers have been involved in a host of experiences that have saved the lives of hundreds of individuals from all across the UAE, including those affected by fires, car accidents and choking incidents.
DISNEY VOLUNTEARS AND ITS COMMITMENT TO POSITIVELY TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES

By The Walt Disney Company Latin America, Argentina

The Walt Disney Company is one of the most admired companies around the world for the unique power of its stories, characters, products and experiences, which are a reflection of the creativity and innovation that characterize the company. This involves the commitment and responsibility to sustain the valuable legacy of the brand, attending to the needs of the different contexts that coexist in the region, with the purpose of inspiring habits and values that contribute both to children's well-being and to more inclusive, supportive and strong communities.
DISNEY VOLUNTEARS: A PROGRAM WITH HISTORY

Disney VoluntEARS is Disney’s international corporate volunteer program that allows its collaborators to donate their time, knowledge and skills to strengthen the communities in which the Company operates, positively impacting children and families.

The program is part of the Company’s Corporate Citizenship efforts, providing inspiration, resources and opportunities, focusing on topics such as Sport and Healthy Living, Conservation and Environment, Children’s Hospitals, Diversity and Inclusion, and Skills for the future.

During fiscal year 2019, Disney volunteers donated more than 3,000 hours of community work, benefiting more than 7600 children and their families throughout the region. Within this framework, they had the opportunity to participate in more than 50 initiatives in different Latin American countries, which included Professional Volunteering activities, visits to Children’s Hospitals and family celebrations, among others.

All these proposals reflect the commitment of the collaborators to the promotion of the well-being of children, families and communities in the region, while at the same time they become an inspiration for volunteers to promote positive change in their colleagues, friends and family.

REGIONAL VOLUNTEERING IN BRAZIL, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF CARAVANA DO ESPORTE

This year, among the Disney VoluntEARS initiatives that were carried out in Latin America, a regional trip to Brazil was developed for the first time to participate in Caravana Do Esporte, an ESPN and Disney project, in partnership with UNICEF, and the Institutes of Esporte & Educação and Mpumalanga, which aims to promote social transformation through sports and art in vulnerable communities in Brazil.

Caravana Do Esporte started in 2005 and seeks to stimulate the creative potential of children and young people, as well as teacher training, always taking into account the history, traditions, cultural roots and natural environment of each city where they take place, to carry out proposals according to their particularities. Disney joined the project in 2014, with the unique presence of its iconic characters, Mickey and Goofy, and the magic of its films.

25 company members from all over the region traveled to the Brazilian town of Guaíba, in Rio Grande do Sul, between the 29th and the 31th of October. During the trip, volunteers shared unique moments with the community. Together, they carried out reforms at São Francisco de "I’ll carry for good in my heart the magical moments with the children of the community. The connection that was generated within the group of volunteers from across the region made the experience unique as well as extraordinary!"

Lilén Grigera, Scheduler, The Walt Disney Company Argentina.
Javier Monje, Commercial Partnership Executive, The Walt Disney Company Colombia

Assis Municipal School, which is attended by more than 500 children and young people. In addition, they participated in different artistic and sports instances, together with more than 2,500 children.

For members of the company, initiatives like this allow to build bonds that transcend borders and enhance empathy, collaboration and teamwork. The regional volunteer trip represented a space of positive emotions, driven by actions carried out with a common and inspiring purpose, and connected with their interests and values. “These were days of pure learning, joy and emotions in every corner. I’ll carry for good in my heart the magical moments with the children of the community. The connection that was generated within the group of volunteers from across the region made the experience unique as well as extraordinary!”, declares Lilén Grigera, Scheduler, The Walt Disney Company Argentina.

This experience also demonstrated how volunteering, apart from being an initiative that benefits others, represents an opportunity for participants to develop, motivate, and connect with their peers and their community. Javier Monje, Commercial Partnerships Executive, The Walt Disney Company Colombia, comments after his participation in the project: “The experience became for me a space to give and share. After a trip with several connections, which included leaving my daily tasks for a few days and separating from my family, I found an invaluable reward by having the opportunity to work in a company that allows you to shake hands with someone who needs it. With their joy, curiosity and innocence, the children of Guaíba rewarded the effort of our team.”

In conclusion, the initiative showed that volunteering can make transcendental contributions, when working in partnership, with a clear common objective: “I am grateful to have been able to share and meet so many wonderful people among collaborators from other offices, teachers and children, all from different countries and with different cultures united by this beautiful cause without barriers of any kind. Without any doubt, it is an experience that fills the heart with joy and motivates us to continue participating and promoting more volunteer activities,” closes Alejandra Ricart, Collections Analyst, The Walt Disney Company Chile.

"...I found an invaluable reward by having the opportunity to work in a company that allows you to shake hands with someone who needs it."

Javier Monje, Commercial Partnership Executive, The Walt Disney Company Colombia
NOSTALGIA: STORIES OF A TIME GONE BY

By Surbhi Tiwari, iVolunteer, India
Did you know that the leading cause of suicides in elderly people is loneliness? Humans are social animals and thrive on social interactions but even with multiple social media apps at our disposal which have transformed the way we communicate, we often feel lost and alone. We crave for close social ties with our family, friends and people in general. But how often do we get the time to talk and connect with them? People, especially the elderly, have so much to share but there is no one to listen. Many are abandoned, while many more feel lonely and left out despite living with their families.

‘Nostalgia - Stories of a Time Gone By’ is an initiative of iVolunteer (India) in partnership with Helpage India to invite young people to volunteer time with the elderly in the community.

Kumar is nearly 88 years old. There is not a single state in India that he has not visited. As a young boy, he ran away from school to explore the country that his Geography teacher described to him. He took a train as a 12 year old, landed up in Chennai, a city in a neighbouring state, set up a tea shop, made enough to live on the streets and get by for his meals – and even saved enough to take the train to a city in another state. An exciting life, he shared his many adventures with the volunteers who heard his fascinating – of adventure and living on the edge.

India has an aging population. We also have a vibrant young population. The past decade has seen many strides in the use of technology, empowering the young with greater access to information and opportunities than ever before. In parallel, we have also seen a change in
the socio-cultural norms of the Indian society. Families have fragmented, giving way to more nuclear families. Women have started playing a more significant role in the economy which has been wonderful from a gender empowerment perspective. Medical science progress has led to improving life and health prospects of the elderly. Given all of these positive things, we are also finding an alienation of an entire generation of those in their 70s. Mobility and access to global opportunity has led to the young finding jobs and creating lives for themselves, often far away from their families and places of origin.

The Nostalgia project aims to deal with the issue of alienation of the elderly while fostering a greater opportunity for inclusion. As a first step, we are reaching out to young people to simply volunteer three hours of their time to build or re-engage with the people above 70 years of age in their respective communities. The aim of the project is to foster a sense of connection between two generations, while one listens to the lives and experiences of another. There is no other objective other than to help the elderly reminisce about their childhood and their years of growing up, falling in love, working, creating their own families, working, and to capture these experiences in the form of a memoir.

The project has spanned for about three months now and more than 50 young people have volunteered as many continue to do so in order
to engage with elderly neighbours, family members, those in senior living centres and old age homes. These volunteers spend time, write and document their stories and learn about a time that must be cherished for its glory and wisdom.

We hope to capture 50-100 stories and to share this with the rest of the world, with the hope to encourage others to volunteer as well, in an ongoing manner. Age boundaries need to be blurred, connections have to be established between those that we are discounting the presence of. More importantly, we need to keep the memories of an era, safe, for future generations to learn from, wonder about and be fascinated by.

As a community, we have always taken care of those around us. The "urbanisation" of volunteering has led to the creation of narrow frameworks of tangible outcome-oriented volunteering – sometimes taking away from the essence of it, that is, to give time unconditionally. The Nostalgia project aims to do just that. To put back the love into the act of volunteering by just listening and showing that we care.
Early childhood care and education are some of the best investments a country can make. That is why we've dedicated so much volunteer time to this issue. It is not only about benefit it has on a country's economy, but the impact that it may bring for its citizens' development and overall future. In this case, we're referring to early childhood for children who are living in vulnerable conditions. This includes children from low income households (primarily run by single mothers who are underpaid) or orphaned children. Many cases also include households with varying levels of domestic violence.

It is scientifically known that the first six years of life are determinative for child development. During this stage, the impressions and experiences a kid receives will shape the person they will become later in life. Think of the children in vulnerable conditions being able to spend up to ten hours in a secure and healthy environment rather than the harsh conditions their families have to live in. This is the work that the Renovación Day Care Center undertakes: they care for kids forty-five days to six years old, giving them a nurturing environment where they are taken care of in the best way possible for their development.

Children's brains develop greatly during the early childhood stage. It is the time where they attain most of their basic physical, cognitive, motor, social, emotional and linguistic abilities. This is what allows them to solve problems, communicate, express their emotions and socialize. These first years of life will determine the kind of person they will be and, in an adequate environment, they will set the basis to becoming a healthy and well-learned individual.

That is why for children in vulnerable conditions, many problems arise later in life. Because they do not have a healthy environment to spend their early childhood in, the development of these crucial skills is stagnated.

By Volunteer Now, UK
Volunteer Now responds to the wide-ranging nature of volunteering in Northern Ireland. With a legacy stretching back 50 years, the organisation works in partnership with an ever growing number of organisations across the voluntary and community, public and private sectors. Volunteer Now also supports a network of volunteer led older persons groups and forums and is a partner along with Engage with Age, North Belfast Senior Citizens and the Health Development Unit for the G6 which consists of elected representatives for the six-area based local seniors forums in Belfast.

The G6, all volunteers, with an average age of 70, exists to be the voice of older people in the City. These are people who have lived through the most recent and most turbulent period of the ‘troubles’. On all ‘sides’ they have experienced a range of trauma and distress and have learned a great deal through this experience. They have the status and capacity to offer positive role models and to challenge attitudes and negative stereotypes in their own communities and beyond.

The G6 is known as an effective consultative group and its views and opinions are sought regularly by policy makers from statutory agencies and a range of other government and voluntary bodies. They also meet once a year with Belfast City Council All Party Reference Group on Older People to share priorities and ideas. The Forum believes that by responding to the issues policy makers raise with them, they can mitigate against any negative impacts and thereby improve the lives of their peers. They are a conduit for meaningful conversations and a channel through which older people exercise some influence on the high-level policies and decisions that impact on local people and the services that are vital to them.

The Forum has developed an Action Plan and identified four key issues which they consider to
have a significant negative impact on the daily lives of older people in Belfast. These are poverty; transport; health & social services and mental health,

The G6 has recognised that loneliness and isolation and a lack of contact with others can have a variety of adverse effects on the individuals involved; this can range from suicide to depression and low moods. In the period 2012 – 2016 almost twice as many older people (those over 50 years) committed suicide as those under 24.

To help address this, these dedicated volunteers have prioritised particular issues in relation to mental health and have agreed to:

- Raise awareness of Mental Health issues for older people
- Raise awareness of Suicide amongst older people
- Act as champions of older people to source ‘good news’ and positive images with a view to reaching those who are alone and isolated and to help them to change their lives.

They have organised mental health awareness sessions across the City; organised Mall-Walking – a tried and tested way of encouraging older people to become more active and get more exercise and have produced a short film to respond to the growing issue of loneliness.

Rita Murray, Chairperson of the G6 explains: "All of our volunteers are of a certain age, we are children of the post war era, survivors of the ‘troubles’, fighting the afflictions of older age, some battling the adversity of poverty and all of us contesting older people’s exclusion from modern society. We are determined to challenge the modern narrative that implies we 'cost more than we contribute!' Far too often we hear that people are living longer, as if that's a bad thing! However, this is only part of who we are, every day we contribute to family and working life, we are mentors, role models, tax payers, counsellors, carers. As older people we have a story, a place in society, we have much to contribute and struggle is only part of our story!"

Within the City, the G6 has proved itself to be an effective forum for consultation, exchange of information and action. These volunteers work hard to take on the issues that impact on the daily lives of older people. They harness the existing expertise, build on it and are determined to pave the way for an Age Friendly Belfast.
MIGRANT VOLUNTEER STRATEGY

By Michelle Kitney, Chief Executive, Volunteering New Zealand
INTRODUCTION

Volunteering New Zealand is the peak body for volunteering in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are a membership organisation, and also funded by the government. We value, advocate and lead volunteering within New Zealand.

Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ) has developed a recent migrant volunteering strategy to improve the experiences of recent migrant volunteers and promote migrant volunteering best practice across the sector.

In this article I share an overview of the programme, it’s successes and perspectives from the volunteers themselves.

RECENT MIGRANT VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

In 2017 VNZ successfully tendered for government funding available to support goals around Facilitating Migrant Participation in Host Communities.

This funding enabled VNZ, in association with participating regional Volunteering Centres (VCs), to deliver:

1. Te Rautaki mō Whanaungatanga: A National Strategy to Support Volunteering for Recent Migrants
2. Connected Volunteering Programme
3. Recent Migrant Volunteering Workshops

THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The need for the Programme was informed by a range of research. Our response was guided by recent migrants who have articulated that many aspects of our current volunteering

“For me there are many advantages to be gained from volunteering: You are helping, you are part of the community, you are part of us.”

Julia Melo, Brazil
model do not meet their needs.

"It's so hard to come to a new place, but finding a community really helped me settle. When we came to New Zealand, my first question was how do we meet people, how can we connect? The answer was volunteering." Thuy Tran.¹

When we started this programme, the data reflected that recent migrants to New Zealand were not accessing volunteering opportunities at the same rate as the wider community. It also showed that recent migrants continued to face challenges in being included within New Zealand communities more generally, and the contributory role meaningful volunteering can play in building connections.

External research found that that generally:

- 37% of recent migrants had difficulty getting involved in their communities,
- 21% did not feel welcome in their communities,
- and 44% had experienced biased or unfair behaviour.

Research undertaken by Cultural Connections on behalf of VNZ showed that many recent migrants continued to face barriers to volunteering, including a lack of adequate information around volunteering opportunities.

Surveyed Volunteer Centres and community organisations indicated that a national strategy and more resources would assist them to better help recent migrant volunteers within their communities.

THE STRATEGY

Te Rautaki mō Whanaungatanga: A National Strategy to Support Volunteering for Recent Migrants articulates our vision, values, strategic goals, and intended outcomes for the state of migrant volunteering in New Zealand. The vision of this programme is that:

"Recent migrants are empowered to connect to, engage with, and enrich their communities through meaningful volunteering. Recent migrants have opportunities to participate in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering that is valued and supported by communities and community organisations."

Our strategy aims to foster more inclusive environments within volunteering. Through meaningful volunteering, recent migrants can have a real opportunity to connect to, engage with, and enrich their communities. It is underpinned by the core principles of Connect, Engage, Share, and Learn, each corresponding

to a strategic goal: Recent migrants are engaged in inclusive, ethical, and impactful volunteering relevant to their skills, needs, and aspirations. Recent migrants build networks and relationships with Volunteer Centres and community organisations, and with their communities. Staff at Volunteer Centres and community organisations have the knowledge and tools to effectively engage, connect, and support recent migrant volunteers. The sector is aware of and values the contribution of recent migrant volunteers, and understands their needs and concerns.

INITIATIVES: WORKSHOPS & CONNECTED VOLUNTEERING

Our programme focused on supporting community and voluntary organisations to enhance the way they reach out to migrant communities, engage with new migrants and actively support migrants as they participate in volunteering activities.

We piloted two initiatives under this programme that connect recent migrants with volunteering opportunities.

Connected Volunteering Programme

The Connected Volunteering Programme supported participating VCs to connect recent migrants with volunteering opportunities relevant to their skills, needs, and aspirations, and to provide additional targeted mentoring.

Recent Migrant Volunteering Workshops

VNZ supported VCs to deliver a series of workshops for recent migrants to raise their awareness about volunteering opportunities in New Zealand, as well as enabling community organisations to learn about the experiences, skills, and needs of recent migrant volunteers.

“For me, volunteering is about meeting each week, with a chance to grow, learn and challenge myself. It is a personal way for me to say: ‘Aotearoa/New Zealand, here I am’.”

Survey Respondent Juan, Colombia

PICTURED BELOW:
Volunteer Wellington’s migrant volunteering workshop participants - including new migrants and local community organisations.
CONCLUSION

The evaluation of our programme indicated that it has been really successful.

From the data we collected, both the Workshops and Connected Volunteering Programme gave many migrants the sense of confidence needed to take their first step into volunteering in New Zealand.

Analysis of data from the post-programme survey showed that 73% Connected Volunteering participants were volunteering at the end of the programme and 64% would definitely volunteer in the future.

More importantly though, recent migrant volunteers reported an increased sense of belonging when they contribute to their communities through volunteer work.

Feedback received from the surveys and online feedback indicated that the majority of recent migrant volunteers felt more confident and had a greater sense of belonging to New Zealand after completing either the workshop or Connected Volunteering Programme.

When asked about the benefits achieved through volunteering, participants most strongly indicated that it enabled them to make new friends, connect and support NZ communities and learn about NZ customs, culture, language and history, and to practice English.

Feedback from Volunteering Centres and community organisations indicated that the strategy document will serve as a useful tool to enable them to better engage with recent migrant volunteers and champion migrant volunteering best practice.

The design and delivery of our programme was motivated and informed by the experiences of recent migrant volunteers.

“Volunteering helped me settle and find new friends. Through volunteering, I met people who were connected through a common cause. We shared smiles, laughs and friendships while working to help the community. Volunteering really opened doors for me. I have been here for two years, and Wellington now feels like home. It is a great feeling to belong here. My circle of friends has also gotten bigger because of volunteering.”

Wael, Syria
VOLUNTEER VISION: DEVELOPING DIVERSE TALENT THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

By Sarah Bonoff, Diversity & Inclusion Program Manager, Volunteer Vision, Germany
“As a person living in Germany with the foreign background, from personal experience I know how hard it is to start life from scratch in another country. I met my mentee in April this year and after a first session we both could notice that is was a really good match :) As he has a similar background as me, we had a lot of topics to discuss. We are both computer scientists, so for him was pretty exciting to hear how a computer scientist working day looks like. For me, on the other side, was interesting to hear from him about the newest tech news as he was regularly following the events in the IT World. Additionally, I helped him to write a CV and prepare for his first job interview, and by the end of our mentorship he got the job at an IT Company. I was proud and very happy for him.”

- Online Mentor, Germany
The quotation above is just one of the many stories of lives impacted through online, skills-based mentoring as a form of volunteer engagement. This journey was enabled by Volunteer Vision, a SaaS provider of online mentoring solutions for the corporate social responsibility (CSR) and diversity and inclusion (D&I) sectors. It is Volunteer Vision’s mission to develop and support diverse talent to create a more inclusive and resilient future workforce.

Volunteer Vision was founded in 2016 in Munich, Germany in the height of the refugee crisis in the country. The founders observed an outpouring of resources and support on the side of businesses to support refugees entering Germany. However, at the same time, they noticed that all of the time, money and other resources being donated to support refugees was concentrated in the cities where these companies happened to be based. That’s when the idea to create a digital solution came to life.

In order to redistribute resources more evenly and reach refugees who otherwise wouldn’t have access to these additional support measures, Volunteer Vision’s founders created an online mentoring platform. In its first iteration, the platform connected employee volunteers to act as mentors for refugees across Germany and support them to learn the German language in a program. In this still thriving program, volunteer mentors are guided every step of the way through registration and enrollment on the platform, through pre-mentoring training sessions, and during their mentoring sessions as well. Mentors are supported in their sessions with the use of embedded eLearning materials which were tailored to support the specific learning needs of refugees learning German. In this way, the platform, content and service provided by Volunteer Vision ensures that both mentor and mentee have all of the information and help they need to be successful in their engagement. This form of engagement creates a very personal and reciprocal experience of volunteering.

Since 2016, Volunteer Vision has grown and expanded to support diverse populations around the globe to develop learning and career skills, while simultaneously empowering employee volunteers to play an active role in shaping more equal and inclusive communities. Volunteer Vision now works with over 100 different organizations and has mentors and mentees active from over 40 different countries.

Volunteer Vision has also expanded their reach to support other diverse populations of people who are systemically underprivileged and face challenges in the workplace. In addition to refugee programs, they have initiatives which support the specific needs
of people with disabilities, women in the workplace, new parents on leave, people in the LGBT+ community, and youth without familial support. In all of these programs, the Volunteer Vision team evaluates the impact of volunteer mentoring engagement on the side of both the mentor and the mentee.

On average, 87% of volunteers reported having a higher job satisfaction rate for having been able to participate in Volunteer Vision online mentoring programs. Numbers like this have a huge impact not only on the individual mentors, but also on the companies which enabled their involvement. 64% of mentors also report feeling more committed to their company as well, indicating that participating in these personalized volunteering opportunities cultivates employee engagement and ultimately an individual’s capacity to continue to give back and do good. The business case for corporate volunteering is clear by now to all who work in this sector and is supported starkly be the evidence generated by Volunteer Vision.

In addition to the business impact of volunteering, the personal impact on volunteers and beneficiaries paints a picture of experiences which develops individuals’ capacity for empathy. Across all programs, volunteers report highly increased levels in communication and intercultural skills. Being connected one on one with someone from a different background than your own, learning about their past, their struggles and their goals raises awareness of issues of inequality facing our societies in a way that is personal and unwavering.

We know that conversations are the way forward. Having dialogues with people of diverse experiences is how we learn, grow and overcome prejudice.

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We know that conversations are the way forward. Having dialogues with people of diverse experiences is how we learn, grow and overcome prejudice. Online mentoring and volunteering enables these conversations and experiences and allows all parties to learn and grow in a safe, structured environment.
Almost one million refugees fled to migrated to Germany during the 2015 refugee crisis. We were able to help them assimilate to a life in a new country, through the generous support and engagement of thousands of volunteers. Volunteers joined efforts to cover all necessities required for daily life, such as accommodations, clothing, meals and language courses. However, this is not a new phenomenon – Germany’s spirit of assisting those in need began decades before. Since the 1980s, refugee assistance has been an established sector of volunteering, first organized by newly founded free associations and Christian parishes. With these preexisting structures in place, we were able to face the challenge of welcoming hundreds of thousands of refugees to our country in 2015.
HELPING CIRCLES FOR REFUGEES – REFUGEE PILOTS

Augsburg’s City Council responded quickly to the crisis, putting in place policies to open decentralized homes, exceeding no more than 80 asylum seekers per house. Each week in 2015, new homes were being opened in various quarters of the city, to accept refugees. Together with the city’s social department, Volunteer Center Augsburg (VC Augsburg) began to promote volunteering for refugees in each of these quarters of the city. This program eventually became Helping Circles. Religious communities, sports clubs, free association for and of migrants, and everyday citizens merged their efforts to support the program. VC Augsburg started training volunteers on asylum laws, intercultural sensitivity, volunteering frameworks and tools to support refugees dispersed throughout Augsburg.

13 Helping Circle hubs have been founded from 2015-2016, consisting of almost 300 volunteers. Aply named “Refugee Pilots", these volunteers are a part of a bottom-up movement, providing assistance from the ground, in their own neighborhoods. They provide courses on German language and culture, accompaniment to public authorities, assistance in looking for internship and jobs and counseling on the education system for children. The focus now is on proper integration for the migrants, now that all their basic needs have been met. We are focusing on long term goals, such as education, cultural and language assimilation, professional training and jobs. It is interesting to note that now, former refugees are also beginning to give back to their new community through volunteering.
MENTORS FOR UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS

A large portion of the refugees who have migrated to Germany are unaccompanied minors. Most of them are young males, between the ages of 15-17 years old. With the Youth Welfare Office, VC Augsburg developed a volunteering project, linking volunteer mentors with these young refugees. The mentors receive training on youth behavior, cross-cultural issues and guidelines for effective mentorship. Some of these volunteers have been mentoring youth refugees for over four years now. They provide personal support and assist in contacting local agencies. Their work plays an important role for integration – expanding the young people’s German through conversation, troubleshooting issues at school, helping manage personal issues and most of all, just providing company through leisurely activities. Over 80 volunteers are currently paired with 100+ mentees.

Growing up in a new country as refugees, during their journey into adulthood, it is incredibly important to provide a stable source of support to these young people. Even those who have entered adulthood since they first arrived in Germany, still receive support from the mentors they had in their teen years. Phase two of the project is to open the mentorship program to native youth, who are also undergoing problems in their lives. There are also plans to expand program to include international cooking courses, craft apprenticeship courses and cultural visits.

SPORTS AND INTEGRATION

Sports is a universal activity, enjoyed by many worldwide. Although the types of sports may vary around the world, the activity itself is known to bring together people of diverse backgrounds, through shared experiences,
challenges, frustrations and victories. Sports can be used as an ideal method of integration.

At Volunteer Center Augsburg, a freelancer staff member pairs up refugees with sports clubs around the city, depending on their sport of choice. Some of the refugees have even started up their own department within their sports club, such as the cricket team initiated by Afghan refugees. The local sports clubs now organize festivals, inviting people of all backgrounds and ages to enjoy a day of playing sports together. With the support of the U.S. General Consulate from Munich, training sessions for women boxing and ice skating has also been established. Moreover, volunteers are now offering swimming courses for refugees, many of whom who do not know how to swim.

These are only few examples of how volunteers have been helping refugees integrate into our community. Although we have approximately 4,500 refugees in Augsburg, equating to only about 1.5% of the total population, more than 46% of our people (approximately 140,000 individuals) have a migration history, whether as migrants themselves or as first-generation Germans.

In Augsburg, refugees are not viewed as an issue we want to push out. Living in Augsburg embodies living in diversity. Some quarters of our city have classrooms with over 80% of its students with an immigrant background. Our children, whether native or from abroad, are growing up in a diverse community every day.

In a few years, no one ethnic group will serve as the majority in our city. Therefore, integration will no longer be the focus. Rather, the challenge at hand will be finding ways for all of us to live harmoniously, keeping in mind our various backgrounds and cultures.

**AMBASSADORS OF MULTIPLICITY**

To find the solution to this future challenge, we have developed the Ambassadors of Multiplicity. We specifically used this term rather than diversity, as we wanted to recognize the multiple values, attitudes and experiences in the lives of the people in our community. These ambassadors are trained in diversity and intercultural relations, increasing their own self-awareness and appreciation for the multiplicity of their community. Their commonalities are more significant than their differences, and at the end of the program the ambassadors go out into the community to celebrate the diversity that exists in our city. We currently have 80 volunteers serving as Ambassadors of Multiplicity, who have organized intercultural fashion shows, public discussions and roundtables.

As citizens, it is our responsibility to integrate newcomers to our community for an inclusive future. An inclusive future is only possible through civic engagement for the Sustainable Development Goals and for peace and justice throughout the world.
AKIKO SETO
AWARDED THE IAVE LIFE MEMBER AWARD

By Kenn Allen, Senior Consultant, IAVE
On November 13, during the 16th IAVE World Volunteer Conference, Akiko Seto was awarded the distinguished IAVE Life Member Award, in recognition of her devoted service to IAVE and the global volunteer community.

Ms. Seto came to her first IAVE World Volunteer Conference in Sydney, Australia in 1986 as part of a delegation from IAVE Japan led by Mrs. Kazuko Toyoda, wife of the president of Toyota Motors. It was her first step into over 20 years of participation in and service to IAVE.

She was instrumental in the planning and management of the 1994 IAVE World Volunteer Conference in Tokyo. She gave strong leadership and management support for IAVE Japan, an independent NGO that for many years was the primary advocate for and voice of volunteering in Japan. IAVE Japan, under her leadership, also brought strong delegations to both IAVE World and Asia-Pacific regional conferences, including some 100 delegates to the 1998 World Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Ms. Seto served on the IAVE board of directors from 1996 to 2002. In 2001, she helped IAVE conceptualize and successfully hold its first ever World Youth Volunteer Summit (WYVS), held in Tokyo. Based on its success, the second decennial WYVS was held in Barranquilla, Colombia in 2011.

Ms. Seto’s life has been defined by service to others. IAVE has been very fortunate to have had her active involvement with us for so long.
We are inviting practitioners, researchers and academics to apply to present a paper at the IAVE 26th World Volunteer Conference:

“Volunteering Together to Enable Change and Create a Better World”

Presenters may be anyone with appropriate knowledge, perspective and experience to respond to one or more of the conference sub-themes. IAVE and the Emirates Foundation seek to involve the widest diversity of presenters.

CONFERENCE SUB THEMES

1. Volunteering 2030
2. Future Leadership
3. Tolerance and Inclusion
4. Corporate Volunteering
5. Volunteering and the Digital World
6. Measurement and Impact
7. Volunteerism and Community Resilience

APPLY BY MARCH 9, 2020

To view the full Call for Papers, including full descriptions for each sub theme and requirements for application, and to submit your proposal, please visit www.iave.org/wvc2020/abstracts
LATIN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP SUMMIT ONLINE REPORT

This September, in partnership with CLAVE: The Latin American Corporate Volunteer Council, we convened the first Latin American Volunteer Leadership Summit. This invitation-only meeting gathered key-leaders from around the region, to focus on critical issues that will shape the future of volunteering in Latin America. In total, 98 participants from 20 countries convened in Lima.

Members of civil society, academic, corporate and government sectors convened for 4 intensive days of networking, learning and strategizing. At the end of the meeting, the group collectively developed a plan of action and laid the groundwork for a sustainable partnership to achieve the goals outlined in the plan.

The full report of the meeting is now available online at www.iave.org/latam2019.

JEFF HOFFMAN, IAVE BOARD MEMBER, AWARDED THE DAILY POINT OF LIGHT AWARD

Jeff Hoffman, IAVE’s North America Regional Representative to the IAVE Board of Directors and board member of Points of Light, was awarded the Daily Point of Light Award at this year’s Corporate Philanthropy and Social Impact Conference, hosted by The Conference Board. The Daily Point of Light Award is presented by Points of Light each day, celebrating the power of individuals to spark change and improve the world.

In response to receiving the award, Jeff stated, “I am very honored to receive this recognition and especially thrilled to receive it on December 5th which is International Volunteer Day... Thank you to Points of Light, my fellow board members, our incredible staff past and present, the countless thousands of volunteers I have worked with over the years.”

16TH IAVE ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE

Last month, IAVE and Volunteer Spirit Network (VSN) hosted the 16th IAVE Asia-Pacific Regional Volunteer Conference in Bangkok, Thailand. The conference theme was “Unlocking the Power of Volunteering”, recognizing the myriad of ways volunteering happens around the world, across all sectors and in various structures. The conference explored ways to develop an enabling environment for volunteering and worked to identify key ways to enhance the recognition of the value of volunteers and the work they do. It also focused on finding methods to improve accessibility of volunteering opportunities. To learn more about the conference and the program, please visit www.iaveap2019.org.
IVCO CONFERENCE 2019

In October, IAVE also attended IVCO 2019, an annual conference organized by the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (Forum). 150 leaders from volunteering for development organizations worldwide convened in Kigali, Rwanda, hosted by VSO International. The theme for this year’s conference was “Advancing Quality in Volunteering for Development”. Following the event, IAVE became a signatory of the Kigali Declaration, taking the pledge to accept the definitions set by the Global Standard for Volunteering for Development and to commit to four principles that seek to advance quality in our work and that underpin the Global Standard for Volunteering for Development.

PROMOTING VOLUNTEERISM AND EXCHANGES IN AFRICA

In October, members of IAVE’s secretariat team, Nichole Cirillo and Raaida Mannaa, and Board Member, Agnetta Nyalita, attended the meeting Promoting Volunteerism and Exchanges in Africa in the Context of the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda 2063, organized by UNV, IFRC and the African Union in Kigali, Rwanda. The event functioned as a platform to discuss how Africa can position volunteering as one of the mechanisms which make a greater contribution in achieving Sustainable Development Goals. It fed into the continental and global synthesis report for the global technical meeting, to be held in July 2020 at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

IAVE.launches ELECTION PROCESS

The Call for Nominations has gone out to current paid members of IAVE, the first step in its upcoming election. In February 2020, members will have the opportunity to vote on candidates from their regions to fill the positions of Regional Representative from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America. Later in 2020, IAVE members will be nominating and voting on candidates for the new World President who will take up the position at the conclusion of the World Volunteer Conference in mid-October.

WELCOMING NICHOLE, IAVE’s NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nichole Cirillo came to IAVE with significant executive experience across the environmental and social justice sectors and in leading a large network of global volunteers. She has held executive leadership roles at Stonyfield Organics, Earthwatch; the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC); and the Public Garden and Boston Common in Boston.

At Earthwatch Nichole led the implementation of a citizen-science volunteering program related to fresh water across 36 cities globally, developed and managed a sustainability leadership volunteering program that built a climate leadership network of 1400 finance executives across five continents. At UUSC she led the design and implementation of a capacity building strategy for global social justice grantees, and trained and mobilized volunteers for disaster relief in Africa and Haiti.