



International
Association for
Volunteer
Effort

VOLUNTEERING **TOGETHER**

*Making a difference to
people and communities*

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...AND MORE

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VOLUNTEERING AND THE DIGITAL WORLD – OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS¹

By Helene Perold, Director, Helene Perold & Associates, South Africa
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Tony Goodrow, Founder & CEO, Better Impact, Canada²

Over the last two decades the use of digital technology has become central to how, where and when people volunteer.

In 2020 our dependence on digital communications technology intensified when governments across the world locked down their citizens in an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19. As the impact of the pandemic takes hold, we can expect to see accelerated demand for investment in digital infrastructure and an upsurge of innovative online formats for volunteer activities. But the impact of the technology is more far-reaching.

The revolution triggered by digital technology is not a development that one can support or reject. It is a cultural change that needs to be shaped.

CHALLENGING TRADITIONAL CONCEPTIONS OF VOLUNTEERING

Voluntary work is no longer always tied to time or location. Volunteers can engage with organizations, causes and projects at any time, from all over the globe. Online volunteer activities can include website development and maintenance, fundraising, translation, education, companionship, or database management. Mobile apps and internet platforms will continue to decentralize volunteer engagement and public action that is organized online will become more widespread.

Moreover, uncoordinated, sporadic and collective actions, together with 'flash mobs' and boycotts, have already become powerful methods of engagement that are organized virtually, often via social media platforms. Sometimes participation in a fundraising campaign or an online petition is perceived as a superficial form of volunteering (called 'clicktivism' or 'slacktivism'), but it can nevertheless produce high levels of mobilisation.

Younger people who prefer to avoid structures associated with traditional volunteer involvement, use the internet in many different ways to support a variety of charitable projects and social causes. Some call them 'new volunteers'.

Activists, volunteers and non-profit organisations are using digital infrastructure to hold states more accountable to their citizens, thereby altering the relationship between the state and civil society. In Germany *FragDenStaat.de* (Ask the State) provides a good example.³

The use of digital technology has also facilitated the emergence of 'pop-up' volunteer initiatives such as Community Connect, a short-term South African volunteer-driven digital platform that was launched in response to widespread food insecurity under the COVID-19 lockdown. The initiative connected households with a support network of individual donors, volunteer groups, NGOs and government agencies.

The classic separation between 'givers' and 'receivers' is being challenged. For example, when users expand a digital map with information about the accessibility of public places for wheelchair users⁴ they are giver and receiver at the same time. This shows that the definitions of being a volunteer may need to be broadened.

Digital transformation will reach into the ways in which volunteers serve. The fear of volunteers being replaced by robots might be justified, but artificial intelligence (AI) also presents opportunities for new roles and personal growth in the world of volunteering.

For example, volunteers have been supported by using a fluffy robot called the 'PARO Seal' with residents in care homes, primarily those suffering with dementia. PARO's presence



calmed the patient, making the volunteer's job easier; PARO benefited patients when volunteers (or staff) were not available to provide emotional support; and sometimes PARO could get a positive response from some residents when volunteers were not able to.

IMPACTS ON VOLUNTEER INVOLVING ORGANIZATIONS (VIOS)

COVID-19 suspended the inherent logic of international volunteering: *Going abroad*. This has tremendous consequences for the programmes, activities and funding of international volunteer sending organisations. The wide-spread repatriation of international volunteers by their governments in response to the pandemic produced a surge in online/remote volunteering.

However, volunteers and their sending organisations are realising that online volunteering is not a substitute for building the relationships and the trust necessary for effective collaboration with partner organisations, nor is it suited for transcultural learning or all activities associated with sustainable development in countries in the Global South.

Although digital technology has

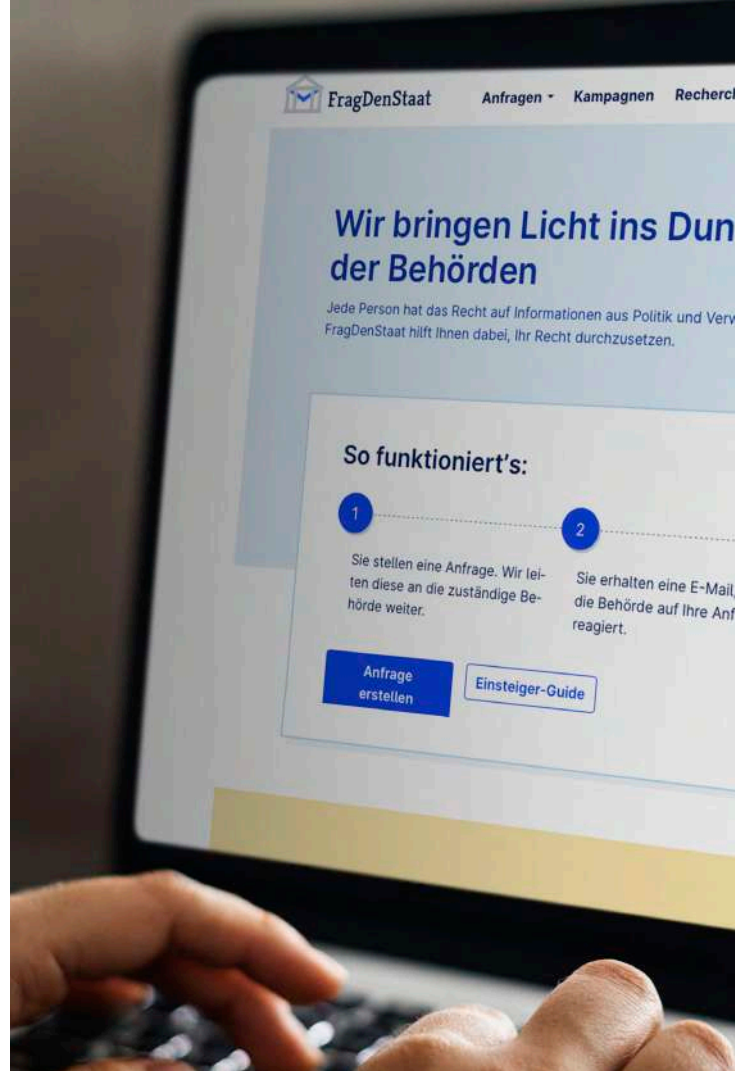
revolutionised work processes as well as volunteer action, VIOs have often resisted the full integration of digital tools into their operations owing to financial constraints and a reluctance to invest in operational retooling. This must change if we expect organizations to operate effectively and efficiently. Organizational challenges include a lack of IT knowledge; questions of data protection; how to manage social media; and the handling of false information or hate speech, to name a few.⁵ Nevertheless VIOs are gravitating towards software that improves volunteer management, and crowdfunding campaigns are being incorporated into organisational funding strategies.

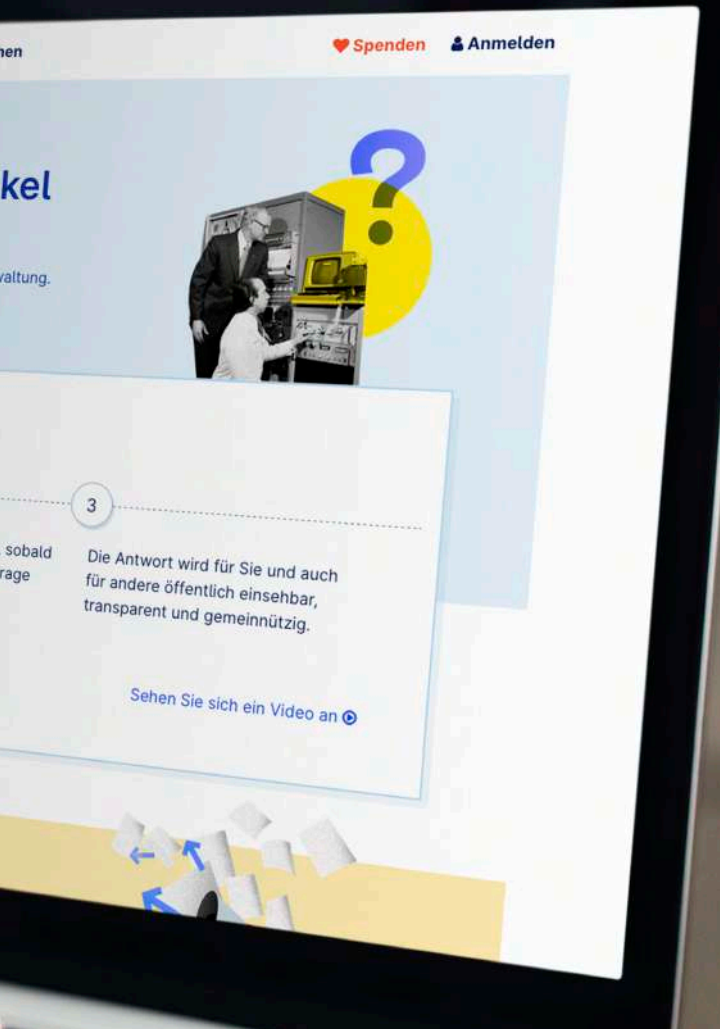
CONSTRAINTS AND CONCERNS

Information and Communications Technology for Development (ICT4D) is a relatively new term for using digital technology to increase access to education, health, and other services in resource-poor communities. Critical to the effectiveness of ICT4D is the importance of involving local communities in the creation of content and apps that are designed to support projects in grassroots contexts. Success factors include drawing on indigenous knowledge and consulting the local volunteers about which design works best in the local context.

No matter how promising this sounds, the **persistent digital divide** between Global North and South, and within communities between rich and poor, constrains the full potential of achieving transformation through digital citizenship. Critical factors are captured in the five 'A's of technology access: availability, affordability, awareness, abilities, and agency.⁶ Each of these is shaped by the wider context of unreliable power supplies, the reach of telecommunications networks, the cost of data and gender inequity as well as other forms of inequality.

Contrary to common perception, digital technology, the internet and AI are not neutral





spaces. Issues of who designs technology platforms and software, how and for what purpose, are central to the transformative potential of ICT4D. **Gender bias** is evident in the technology field, which is heavily male-dominated. Wikipedia appears to collect ‘neutral’ knowledge, but has a prevalence of male editors. In recognition of such bias, an initiative called Herstory was formed in 2016 to help close the gender knowledge gap on Arabic Wikipedia.

False information, hate speech and government surveillance are increasingly becoming a threat to volunteers and activists. Pro-gay activists in Ghana or citizens who assist refugees in Europe are being threatened on social media; in some cases their names are put on ‘enemy lists’ by far-right organisations. VIOs and civil society must find solutions, together with tech firms and governments, to strengthen the protection of citizens and volunteers.

The volunteer sector has to become more actively engaged in a discussion about **shaping the use of digital technology** and infrastructure in the public interest. If not, the field will be left wide open to the big tech firms and to politicians who might have different priorities.

Endnotes:

¹ This article is based on a paper commissioned by IAVE in 2020 entitled “Volunteering and the Digital World: Extending the power of volunteering through new technologies”, written by Helene Perold, Benjamin Haas and Tony Goodrow. <https://www.iave.org/virtualforums2020/volunteering-and-the-digital-world-extending-the-power-of-volunteering-through-new-technologies/>

² Helene Perold is the Director of Helene Perold & Associates, an independent research and consulting company in Johannesburg, South Africa. Benjamin Haas works as a Research Associate and PhD candidate at the Institute for Sociology and Social Psychology at the University of Cologne, Germany. Tony Goodrow is the founder and CEO of Better Impact, a Canadian software company that has been helping the nonprofit and governmental sector in over 20 countries since 2001.

³ www.fragdenstaat.de The initiative is part of the Open Knowledge Foundation (OKF) Germany: www.okfn.de/en.

⁴ www.wheelmap.org

⁵ Matuschek, K. & Lange, V. (2018). Engagement im digitalen Zeitalter. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Bonn. P6

⁶ Roberts, T & Hernandez, K (2019). Digital Access is not Binary: The 5'A's of Technology Access in the Philippines. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/isd2.12084>



THE A2Z OF CORPORATE VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMS

By Jyotsna Mahajan, Product Manager, Goodera, India

While COVID-19 continues to have the world in its grip, businesses have adopted several countermeasures to deal with it. Corporate employees have been directed to work from home. Remote working is powered through better online connectivity. However, the isolation, physical distancing, absence of demarcation between workspace and personal space, the impact on incomes, and related factors continue affecting the mental health of corporate employees severely.



VOLUNTEERING FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

A heartening observation is that corporates are responding to the situation effectively while upholding their volunteering goals. A recent survey conducted by Goodera reveals that 51% of U.S. business organizations have upheld their volunteering goals for 2020. Moreover, 56% of the organizations have pivoted to virtual volunteering as a means to promote the mental well-being of employees and engagement with them. Virtual volunteering enables employees to be part of a larger cause and develop a sense of purpose. Employees bond with one another through team activities and increased interaction, thereby improving overall mental health.

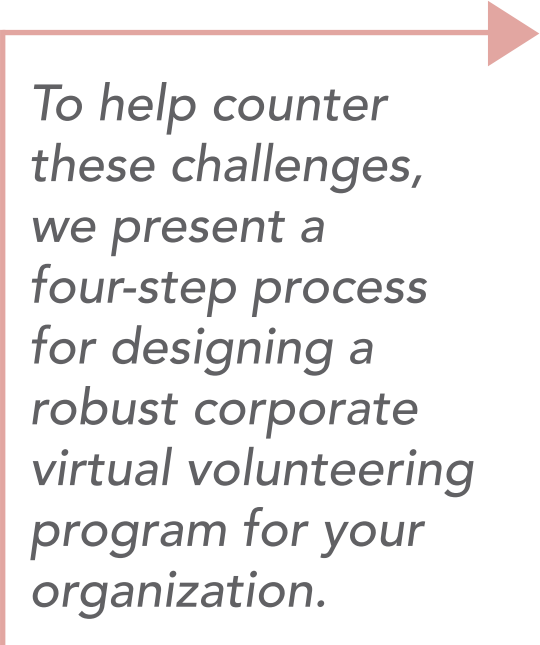
PROS OF VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING

Virtual volunteering brings many advantages for corporations and their employees. It helps overcome geographical barriers, making opportunities from any location and region accessible to volunteers. It allows flexibility so that employees can volunteer at their convenience without disrupting their work or family time. It facilitates team bonding, as several volunteers can work together remotely as a team.

Virtual volunteering reduces overhead costs, including travel expenses, making it economical. Moreover, a greater variety of online skill-based volunteering projects can be designed. Through analytics, performance metrics such as the number of volunteer hours can be measured easily, with greater accuracy.

CHALLENGES OF VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING

Virtual volunteering poses several challenges before organizations. First, determining the right volunteering opportunities curated to match the diverse skill sets of employees may be an uphill task. Second, training and orientation of all stakeholders, including corporate employees, nonprofits, and others within the organization itself may become difficult in these testing times. Third, it may be difficult for the organization to handhold and coordinate the virtual volunteering process. Finally, while working remotely, it can be challenging to build the emotional connection associated with volunteering and engage volunteers effectively.



To help counter these challenges, we present a four-step process for designing a robust corporate virtual volunteering program for your organization.

STEP 1: Define the program parameters

The following attributes of the program should be defined with precision:

- 1. Goals:** What is the targeted number of volunteers or hours? The organization must set these goals precisely, to enable measurement of performance on completion.
- 2. Approach:** The organization must define the volunteering strategy clearly. Will it adopt a campaign-based approach that addresses a specific cause area such as education or elder care? Does the virtual volunteering program aim to address a specific beneficiary group such as the elderly or teenagers? Will team effort be required? Or will it involve individual events and activities? All these questions need to be answered as accurately as possible.
- 3. Processes:** Processes need to be laid down for the induction and orientation of volunteers, guiding them towards achieving their goals smoothly.

STEP 2: Curate opportunities for virtual volunteering

This is a critical stage wherein volunteering opportunities need to be carefully selected, keeping in mind the talents, preferences, and capabilities of employees. Additionally, volunteering opportunities should be aligned with the key focus areas of the organization. The organization needs to collaborate with nonprofits to curate appropriate opportunities and design a seamless volunteering experience for employees.

STEP 3: Create campaigns and content to drive registrations

Creating engaging and powerful content across formats, including videos, is key to driving registrations. It is also important to ensure that the content is disseminated amongst employees through multiple channels. Emails, e-newsletters, and internal collaboration tools should be used effectively to announce the virtual volunteering program to employees and communicate with them periodically.

STEP 4: Ensure a seamless experience

After getting employees excited about online volunteering, the next step is to ensure a seamless experience from registration to completion. Registrations should be made easy for volunteers. The next steps for volunteers should be described clearly to avoid confusion. The number of volunteer hours and the method of impact measurement of the activity or task must be specified.

The most essential element at the heart of the entire employee volunteering journey is communication. It is critical to communicate with volunteers before the event to define expectations and goals, during the event to provide direction, and after the event to express gratitude through notes, emails, and videos.



KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE GOODERA EXPERIENCE

Based on our diverse experiences in partnering with several organizations, we sum up the following learnings for running effective virtual volunteering programs:

1. Short is effective:

Simple and short activities and team events are more likely to be completed. In companies with successful volunteering programs, it was found that the ratio of registration to completion for team-based events is 90%. Further, simple and short activities of less than 1 hour in duration garnered 80% registrations in these companies.

2. Promotions hold power:

Content-driven and people-centric promotions are critical influencing factors in driving volunteer engagement. It is observed that videos serve as an effective format for driving registrations. Employee ambassadors

are vital, as they tend to be early adopters, often providing feedback on the effectiveness of the communication, and tend to encourage the culture of volunteering from the base of the hierarchical pyramid in the organization.

3. Persist to succeed:

Our experience reveals that almost 75% of employees need more than two nudges before they complete a volunteering activity. Thus, regular and frequent communication with positive reinforcement is key to driving completions. Reaching out to employees just once by announcing the virtual volunteering program may not be sufficient. Regular communication providing information, guidance, feedback, support, recognition, and praise is essential.

Even though teams are apart right now, companies need to develop and implement virtual volunteering programs now more than ever, to engage employees and promote their well-being, while creating positive change.



VIRTUAL MENTORING FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & FOOD SECURITY

By Giselle Mendez, Volunteer Innovator, Founder & Managing Director, Volunteer Center of Trinidad & Tobago

The Volunteer Center of Trinidad & Tobago (VCTT) is a volunteer matching platform which connects people to high impact custom built interventions which support the Sustainable Development Goals. At VCTT we believe in the transformational power of people, and our family of volunteers curates an all-inclusive space for citizens to be activated and meaningfully engaged in pioneering viable solutions, in support of our Vision of A Volunteer In Every Home.

Our current interventions include the **Me to We E-Mentorship Program**, the **Grown in East Port of Spain Home & Community Garden Initiative** and the development of a regional network for volunteerism. The COVID-19 global pandemic tremendously impacted the way in which our work is implemented in the Caribbean, however VCTT rapidly responded through a process of pausing, assessing our new internal and external context and quickly pivoting two of our flagship projects through virtual volunteering.

ME TO WE E-MENTORSHIP

With a focus on Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education, VCTT – in collaboration with the Princes Trust International, the National Training Agency of Trinidad & Tobago and Czar Brand Management Company – transformed our afterschool youth mentorship program to a virtual mentorship model. Through this effort, the ME to WE E-Mentorship Program was born.

This program has connected 30 vulnerable secondary school students from across Trinidad & Tobago with a family of mentors through Zoom and an online mentorship platform. The program is built on the premise, “It takes a village to raise a child” and aims to:

1. Reduce the critical psychosocial challenges of youth
2. Increase the civic consciousness of mentors and mentees





3. Awaken and explore the mentees' personal talents

To date 88 prospective mentors have been trained in a dynamic, thought-provoking and interactive 2-day virtual training session where the following key areas were covered:

1. Safeguarding & Child Protection
2. The Truth about Mentorship – with representatives of public and private sector agencies including childline, psychologists and behavioural specialists
3. The Student & How to Deal – led by the Trinidad and Tobago Children's Authority

Once trained, 30 volunteer mentors were officially connected with youth virtually. Since August 2020, our pairs meet weekly for their mentorship engagements which include one-to-one and group (inspirational and personal development) mentorship sessions. To facilitate, online mentorship tablet devices and internet access were provided to our youth.

THE GROWN IN EAST PORT OF SPAIN INITIATIVE

Another strategic focus areas includes interventions which support **Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger**.

Food security and livelihood development are growing challenges for low income households in Trinidad. In this vein, in partnership with the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Program, WhyFarm, Ruach Tova and other agencies, VCTT joined hands to expand our pilot community garden/food park initiative. The program, initially launched in Gonzales in April 2018, has now expanded to other communities in East Port of Spain including Sea Lots, Chinapoo, Mon Repos and Port of Spain North. These areas represent some of the most vulnerable in the country and hence, an intervention like this promotes food security benefits and psychosocial development.





Due to COVID-19, we were unable to proceed in the short term with rolling out our community gardens. As such, our pivot plan expanded the scope of our initial goals to include a focus on home gardening by providing seed kits to targeted low-income East Port of Spain households and utilizing the help of virtual agriculture mentors. An agriculture mentor is a volunteer with a thriving green thumb, who has experience in home gardening, agriculture and is passionate about sharing their skills and gifts with communities. Three volunteer mentors were recruited and connected to 30 households across the East Port of Spain community to provide home gardening support and guidance via phone calls and WhatsApp messages.

For both programs, through our virtual volunteers, we are able to stay connected to our communities and ensure that a needed injection of support and food through mentorship are provided to those most in need during this challenging period. It has also underscored severe gaps around digital literacy, digital access and the infrastructure required to ensure our virtual volunteering models are pro-poor and designed with those most vulnerable at the forefront.

For further information on our work contact admin@vctt.org, visit us on Facebook and Instagram (@volunteercentertt) or check out our website at www.vctt.org.

	<p>VCTT is a member of IAVE's Global Network of Volunteering Leadership (GNVL).</p>
<p>GNVL <small>GLOBAL NETWORK OF VOLUNTEERING LEADERSHIP</small></p>	<p>Learn more at networks.iave.org</p>

REMOTE VOLUNTEERING: A NECESSITY WHICH HAS BECOME AN OPPORTUNITY

By Benedetta Falletti di Villafalletto,
Project Director, Voluntariado y Estrategia, Spain

March 2020 marked an important turning point for employee volunteering. Unexpected and drastic lockdowns all over the world caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have abruptly interrupted all in-person volunteering activities for the foreseeable future. Corporate volunteering programs have had to make an important decision: to freeze all the activities despite social needs being higher than ever or to adjust to a remote format.

The evidence in Europe and Latin America, collected by a survey based on 84 companies published in August 2020 by Voluntare¹ network, *COVID – 19 Impact on Corporate Volunteering*², showed that 82% of the companies have adapted their volunteering program to the remote format.

This said, only about 10% of them could transform all their programs and the great majority have implemented new activities. The result is however very positive – more than 70% have seen a positive impact on their volunteering program and 60% have registered higher engagement from employees.

Another study, based on the experience of VolunteerMatch³ in the USA, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Volunteering A Two-Month Comparison*⁴, is less optimistic, with heavy cancellations in volunteer attendances and only 30% could create virtual activities in March. However, the trend in May was significantly improved with 45% of the organization successfully launching remote activities.

Voluntare's study showed that virtual

6 benefits of non-presential corporate volunteering



INCLUSIVENESS:

enables the participation of volunteers with different abilities.



FLEXIBILITY:

involves people with different working hours or mobility problems and connects with the young.



ATTRACTION TO THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM:

for an 80% of participants, this is their first experience.



ACCESIBILITY:

we are able to participate from a computer, tablet or smartphone and reach isolated geographic areas more difficult to access.



SUSTAINABILITY:

respectful format with the environment, as movements are minimized.



AGILITY:

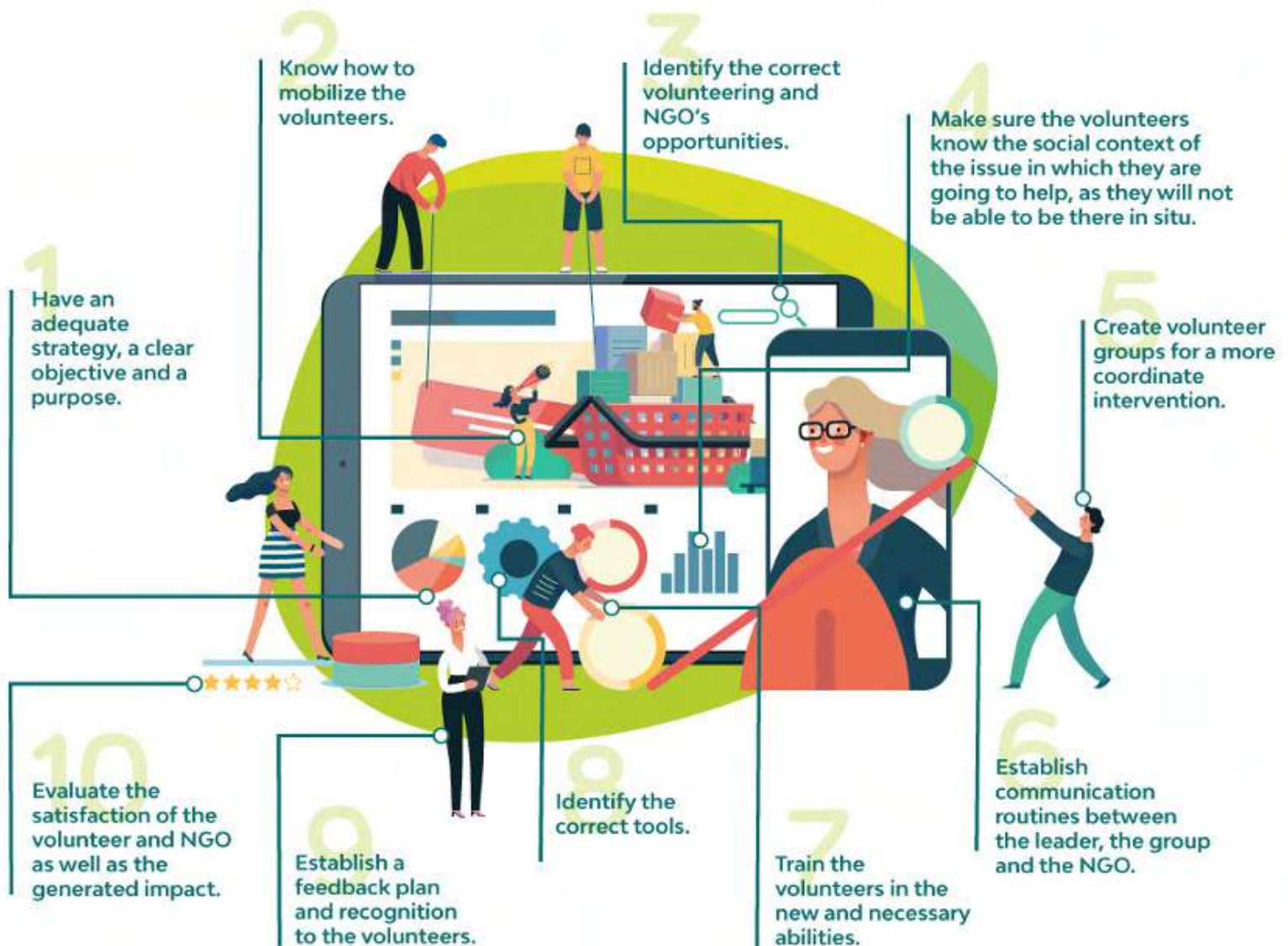
to act in crisis situations.



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Steps to launch a non-presential corporate volunteering program



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volunteering was not new for only 21% of the companies interviewed but 9 out of 10 believe **remote volunteering has come to stay**. Why? Because it was already a foreseen and expected trend (Voluntare 2017, *Report on Trends and Innovation in Corporate Volunteering*⁵). Above all, companies and social organizations have discovered that it has great benefits. Before exploring these opportunities unveiled by remote volunteering, it is convenient to define the different concepts so as not to confuse or misuse them.

Remote volunteering is when those who dedicatedly work on a volunteer project and are not based in the project location, support their placement from home. It may be the case for cross-borders volunteers who finish their project after returning home. It can also be the case for volunteers who assemble kits for people in need or write letters for the elderly living in nursing homes. Within remote volunteering, there is **virtual volunteering**. These are typically online mentorship opportunities or online trainings/webinars etc. The activity is carried out in a virtual environment and is also referred to as online volunteering. Finally, **digital volunteering** activities are the activities that use digital technology and innovation to widen the reach, quality and/or impact of a project. E-volunteering is not a volunteer 'type' – rather, it is the mode of delivery.

Now that the concepts are clearer, why is remote volunteering so successful for employee volunteers? Voluntariado y Estrategia⁶ has highlighted six great advantages of not doing in-person volunteering. Most of them provide the opportunity for more employees to engage and participate in volunteering activities by increasing its **inclusiveness** and enabling

people with disabilities to participate. They allow for more **flexibility** and the possibility to adapt the activity to the volunteer's agenda, **attracting new volunteers** who could not previously participate for whatever reason. Greater **accessibility** makes it possible for employees to participate from other locations. Moreover remote volunteering is, in many cases, more **sustainable**, according to environmental and economic points of view, because it reduces travel and logistical needs. It is also more **agile**, as it allows safe and prompt action during an emergency or crisis.

Having organized many virtual and remote activities over the last six months, we have learned valuable lessons and steps needed to launch these programs successfully. The most important one is to work hard, hand-in-hand with social partners, to identify a project where volunteers really have an impact. It's also critical to provide proper training and communication to display all the potential and benefits of the activity.

Volunteers, beneficiaries, social entities and companies are all looking forward to being able to resume face-to-face activities and feel the warmth of the smiles, hugs and laughs once again. However, remote volunteering has opened new opportunities, engaging new volunteers and modernizing the social sector, and fortunately, because of this, it has come to stay.

Links:

¹ <https://www.voluntare.org>

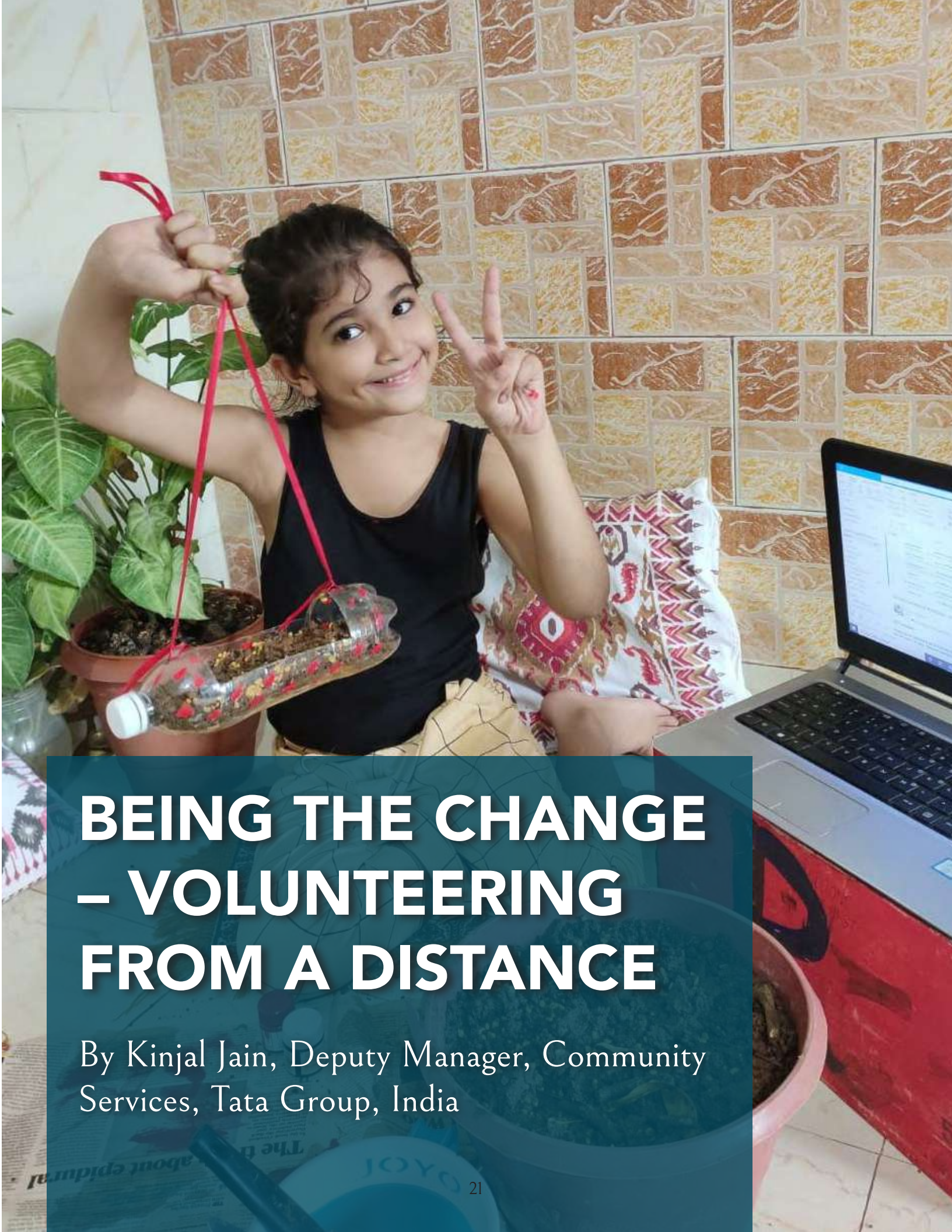
² <https://www.voluntare.org/wpdm-package/estudio-impacto-de-la-covid-19-en-el-voluntariado-corporativo/>

³ <https://www.volunteermatch.org>

⁴ <https://www.voluntare.org/wpdm-package/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-volunteering-usa/>

⁵ <https://www.voluntare.org/wpdm-package/trends-innovation-corporate-volunteering-report/>

⁶ <https://voluntariadoyestrategia.com/en/>



BEING THE CHANGE – VOLUNTEERING FROM A DISTANCE

By Kinjal Jain, Deputy Manager, Community Services, Tata Group, India

Tata employees and companies are bound together by a set of distinctive Tata values and an ethos of 'giving back' to society. Volunteering is one of the mechanisms that enables this – it channels the group's most valuable asset, its 700,000 plus strong workforce from 100 countries, to go 'beyond business' and contribute to the social advancement of communities by 'rolling up our sleeves and being the change that we wish to see in this world'.

Tata Engage, the group's volunteering program, was established in 2014 with the mission to encourage Tata volunteers (including family members and retirees) around the globe to engage with the community by contributing time and skills.

It has grown in terms of volunteer participation and volunteering hours, involving scores of volunteers to clock a million hours since its inception. The intent was to continue the journey with the same vigour in 2020. However, COVID-19 halted ongoing volunteering initiatives and required changes in strategy to curate meaningful opportunities for employees and to support communities in need.

ProEngage, the group's skill-based volunteering program, pairs volunteers – for extended periods and on their personal time – with NGOs, enabling them to work in teams and use their skills and knowledge to address identified problems. ProEngage already has a rich track record of success in benefiting NGOs through financial modeling, human resource management, marketing, coding, MIS building and strategy formulating. We launched an online edition of ProEngage on 15th June 2020. The team reached out to organizations who could be supported through capacity and capability building and sourced over 450 virtual projects from 160+ partner organizations across the globe. When volunteer recruitment began, we received an overwhelming response of 1800+ applications. After a careful selection





process and an e-orientation program, 900 volunteers started working on 410 projects with 120 partner organizations in July. The projects include creating performance management systems, documenting best practices, mentoring young students, conducting social media marketing, et al, encompassing almost every skill set and interest area.

The second initiative, Tata Volunteering Week (TVW), was launched on 5th September 2020 – the International Day of Charity. TVW is organized biannually as a series of half-day volunteering opportunities curated by Tata companies to introduce their employees to volunteering and to enable them to share the experience with family members and colleagues from across the group. Usually, this entails volunteers to go out and spend time in communities. This edition was revised with a set of guidelines, toolkits and an idea bank to get Tata companies started under the constraints of the pandemic. The enthusiasm of our Volunteer Champions in participating companies enabled the group to conduct 2,500+ activities, clock over 100,000 hours, involve 35,000 volunteers, and reach over 200,000 beneficiaries during TVW.

Here are a few of our companies' activities:

1000 Voices: Tata Communications took up the challenge of recording 1000 inspirational stories and poems which were then shared with the visually challenged for their enjoyment and learning. The volunteers were creative with voice modulations while taking help from family members to depict different voices.

Hands-On Banking: Tata Chemicals volunteers were oriented to create aids in the form of concept notes, guides, worksheets, quick quizzes, interesting videos, posters, etc. to help people better understand banks and other financial sector institutions. They created a digital resource library for NGOs that caters to women and young adults.

Ignite My Future: With schools across the world closing in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tata Consultancy Services recognized the need for continued education and is addressing it using its pre-existing STEM development program, Ignite My Future in School. Volunteers conduct virtual classes 5 days a week and mentor young students.

Health and Sustainability: The theme POSHAN MAAH (Nutrition Month) 2020, as declared by the Government of India, focuses on two matters – identifying and tracking children with Severe Acute Malnutrition and promotion of kitchen gardens. Tata Consulting Engineers (TCE) demonstrated how to grow and consume nutrient-rich microgreens to caregivers and teachers. According to the second aspect of the theme on plantation drive, TCE also conducted a session on kitchen gardening, explaining its necessity and health benefits.

Wildlife Conservation: Volunteers from Tata Consumer Products created an awareness program on wildlife conservation and protection and created food packets for animals in Bangalore.

Mentoring Youth: Volunteers from Tata Projects and Tata Motors mentored young students on various topics like choosing careers, preparing for interviews, and soft skills development.

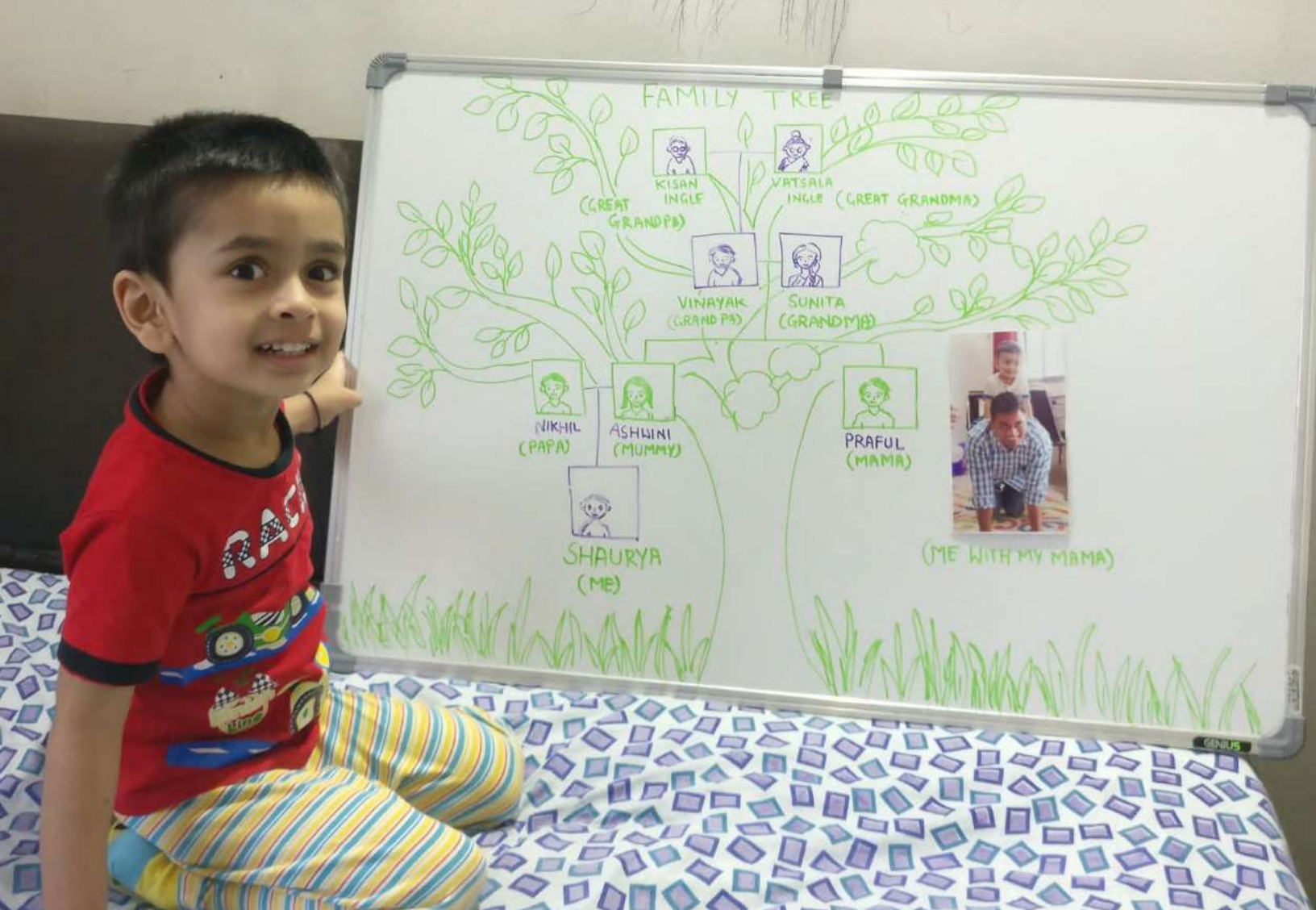
Digital Marathon: Tata Realty and Infrastructure pledged to donate a PPE kit to a frontline health worker for every 5 km ran by its volunteers at a specially curated digital marathon. 90 employees participated, and 169 PPE kits were donated.

Needs Assessment of Migrants: Volunteers from Tata Power reached out

to stranded migrants during the pandemic and conducted a needs assessment in partnership with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

While our efforts on virtual volunteering shall continue, we have many challenges to tackle:


- **Missing beneficiary connection:** Connecting directly with beneficiaries is one of the highlights of volunteering – this is difficult with virtual volunteering.
- **Screen fatigue:** To combat this, volunteering activities were designed as 'do-it-yourself' to allow employees to complete the activities on their own time.
- **Absence of NGO representatives during the activities:** On ground activities were facilitated by NGO representatives and they supported the volunteers in completing the activities.
- **Shorter duration:** It is difficult to virtually volunteer for long durations. Generally, training and awareness sessions were planned for up to 1 hour – one cannot expect beneficiaries to sit in front of mobile, laptops for long hours.
- **Missing on-site activities:** With virtual volunteering, most of the activities are focused on training, awareness, and fitness sessions. Volunteers miss activities where they also need to use their physical strength, such as cleanliness drives, plantation drives, sports activities, etc.
- **Team bonding:** This doesn't happen as sessions are conducted by individual volunteers.
- **Increase in participation:** It is a challenge to increase volunteering hours and commitments with virtual volunteering.





THE POWER OF JOINT EFFORTS IN PERU

By José Gallegos, Junior Consultant, Ikigai Laboratorio Social, Peru



In 2017, the floods and landslides caused by El Niño Costero¹ took Peruvians by surprise. Willingness to help was widespread amongst the population, but efforts functioned independently. Alexandra Infante, CEO of *Ikigai Laboratorio Social*, recalls, "That year just a few other organizations came together. We realized how important it was to work together." Three years later, the COVID-19 pandemic struck and its effects escalated rapidly. This time there would be a quicker response - the creation of **Juntos Nos Hacemos Cargo² (JNHC)**.

On March 6, the first case of the coronavirus was reported in Peru. Ten days later, President Martín Vizcarra declared a state of emergency and mandatory social isolation. "We had been working on a campaign to bring hygiene kits to vulnerable communities," says Vanessa Vásquez, executive director of *Juguete Pendiente*. "After the presidential message, we had a meeting with fellow organizations and decided to launch JNHC." Bearing in mind the expertise of the entities involved, they asked themselves "How could we help as a social ecosystem³ in this situation?" They organized their work in commissions: fundraising and donations, research, communication, mental health and virtual volunteering.



The Fundraising and donations commission took the task of tending to the basic needs of many vulnerable sectors. "Since we had expertise in managing humanitarian aid, we focused on raising money, identifying communities and supplying them with hygiene and food kits for households, as well as medical kits for health workers", says Vanessa. Some of the participant networks (*Soy Voluntario, Proa, MeUno*) had areas of influence where they had been working for years and held a direct relationship with community leaders. This allowed them to design an effective delivery structure, guaranteeing aid where it was really needed. As a result, they accomplished all their goals: half a million, three million and five million soles⁴.

The Research commission's task was to collect data on how affected communities worked and what problems they were having. "We had to collect this information to avoid going in blindfolded." This first-hand research would allow the aid networks to be integrated and optimized, in addition to mapping potential future projects and observing the side effects of the crisis.



The Communication commission's work was a great challenge from the start since they had no prior experience on health emergencies. At the same time, there was very little information about the virus. Data regarding the needs of vulnerable groups was also lacking. "At the beginning it was very hard, because there was a lot to communicate. Water wasn't getting to human settlements and hospitals didn't have the adequate equipment. We were very focused on advocating and making these issues visible," says Jonathan Rossi, director of *Casa Ronald McDonald*.

When the pandemic started, a large sector of the population started experiencing higher levels of anxiety, uncertainty and depression. However, due to the social stigma against mental health, many people had difficulty addressing these issues. **The Mental health commission** was coordinated by *DeMentes, Dando+, Sonqo & Maqui* and *Fundación Calma*. These organizations created the "*Por mí, Por ti, Por el Perú*" campaign. This was directed into three main axes: Communication, to position the importance of mental health, fight stigma and bring attention to the issue through media; National support, aimed at giving free psychological support through hotlines; and Support to the volunteer, to reinforce the space for conversation and reflection.



Virtual volunteering was crucial from the start. March is the starting point for many projects in Peru, so there were a large number of volunteers with no volunteering initiatives to participate in. The biggest challenge was learning how to capitalize on their know-how in digital world. They decided to start digital volunteering with micro-entrepreneurs and primary school students in affected populations. Later on, community-based tourism was also identified as a weakened sector in need. To date, there are three ongoing programs bringing support on entrepreneurship, education and tourism.



Small and medium-sized companies represent 99.5% of formal companies in the Peruvian economy. In that regard, it was extremely important to provide care and support. "Guerrero Emprendedor consists of a training process for economic reactivation for micro-entrepreneurs affected by the crisis through digital channels," tells us Mariana Iturrizaga, Specialist in Multi-stakeholder Partnerships of the UNDP. At all stages, they have direct support offered by volunteers that assess them. The program aims to create a virtual space where microentrepreneurs learn useful information in seven weeks: Covid protocols, finance, marketing, management, and other elective courses. These have all been prepared by the allied organizations within the program. These alliances include private companies, universities and government entities such as the Ministry of Labor. To date, the program has more than 400 graduates, and has involved more than 200 volunteers. Over 700 new entrepreneurs signed up for the third pilot, and they are about to launch the fourth edition with new partnerships.

At the beginning of April, the Ministry of Education launched *Aprendo en Casa*, a digital learning platform to study from home. On that line, *Guerreros por la Educación* started with the purpose of accompanying children and youth to reinforce lessons they receive at home. They brought together a group of expert partners with proven methodologies to design classes. "We have worked with social organizations that provided content that has already been developed in math, reading and English," says Ana Paula Albín, General Director of Proa. "We started the program with communities with whom we had already been working with. We have put digital volunteers in the center, to be the teachers

for these communities.” Today, the program has had four pilots in the cities of Lima and Cusco, with over 130 students and 77 tutors. They have recently signed an alliance with the Ministry of Education, adding up to over 4,500 new students enrolled in the program. Students and volunteers have responded positively, with a 100% satisfaction rate, and eagerness to continue learning, “It is very cute. Boys and girls prepare with a backpack and sneakers to go to their computers.”

Guerreros por el Turismo responded to the severe effects COVID-19 had on community-based tourism. The program focuses on training tourism entrepreneurs with the necessary tools to face the current crisis, teaching them about COVID-19 and its effects on the industry at a larger scale, case studies from other regions and business sustainability. The tools have been developed through partnerships with experienced organizations on the respective fields, including the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism. Primarily through phone calls, entrepreneurs have 2 weekly meetings to review progress and absolve any doubts related to what they have learnt with their tutors. So far, they held one successful pilot in the rural area of Puno with 277 entrepreneurs connected to 150 volunteers. Nowadays they are working on extending the program to other affected areas around the country. The three virtual programs have surpassed initial expectations. “People selflessly join and seek to learn from you, and that you learn from them”, says Gemma. “I believed that this double path could only be found with in-person volunteering – hand in hand. I have learned that you can also experience it in a digital community”.





“As JNHC matured, we wanted to empower people in the face of all these new challenges and new difficulties”, Mariana points out. As projects began to unfold, they had to decide where JNHC was going in the long run, considering new connections. It is then that JNHC took a new direction: *Perú Voluntario*. Consolidating its alliances, this is becoming the first formal national volunteering network in the country, whose goal is to promote and integrate volunteering through existing platforms. Actions and projects will be better organized within *Perú Voluntario*. There is an element of citizenship on the agenda for civic education, “From the networks that are already being generated, we are going to strengthen the social fabric, something that has deteriorated greatly with the crisis. We want volunteering to be valued as an exercise in active citizenship, focused on overcoming social problems in a real way”, says Jonathan.

One of the most valuable resources of *Perú Voluntario* is the friendship and commitment of the team that has shaped it. As Gemma says, “If I hadn't found a community in my friends, we wouldn't have gotten the same results.” As Vanessa points out, “The best thing of all is having friends who live and share your purpose. We have managed to cover lots of scenarios that a single organization couldn't have covered alone.” This common purpose has allowed institutionalism and ego to be set aside. As Ana Paula assures us, “We know that the greater good is prioritized among us, and not so much the name of our organizations. The team is made up of ethical people with a very strong heart for solidarity.”







With the idea set in motion, a committed team, *Perú Voluntario* was just launched and seeks to join efforts in favor of a strong ecosystem for the future. Among the topics on agenda, these stand out: generation of exchange and sharing, promotion of research, mobilization of resources for sustainability and professionalization of volunteering. All of these will enhance what has been achieved and continue to improve the daily reality of many Peruvians. "Three years ago, we were four organizations in the face of an emergency", Alexandra recalls, "Today we are more than fifty, and we keep adding up!"

For more information, visit www.visitperuvoluntario.pe



Perú Voluntario is a member of IAVE's Global Network of Volunteering Leadership (GNVL).

Learn more at networks.iave.org

TELEHEALTH: LEADING TRANSFORMATION IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

By Sabrina C. Clark, Ph.D., Director, VA
Voluntary Service, U.S. Department of Veterans
Affairs, United States

Operating the nation's largest health care system, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) uses a wide variety of technologies to ensure excellence in care delivery. New technologies are revolutionizing health care, and VA is recognized as a world leader in the development and use of telehealth. VA's capacity to leverage this innovative and high-quality service has been a critical staple of care during the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) response to COVID-19. Designed to ensure access to services when patients and practitioners were geographically separated, we couldn't have imagined telehealth having to be used at its present-day levels as a result of a global pandemic.

In 2019, over 900,000 Veterans received care through VA telehealth. Any Veteran who

Virtual Volunteer Program Expands Access to Care for Veterans

qualifies to receive VA care and lives in one of the 50 U.S. states or a U.S. territory is eligible to use VA telehealth. Since early March 2020, telehealth has increased sevenfold, with more than 18,000 Veterans system-wide using VA Video Connect (VVC) for services. As VHA's COVID-19 response continues, more VA providers are delivering virtual health care; including more than 75% of primary care and mental health providers.

While this alone is extraordinary VA has tapped an even more vital resource to assist in helping Veterans to access care through VVC---volunteers. VA's Voluntary Service (VAVS) proudly boasts the support of more than 61,000 volunteers who serve more than 9 million hours each year; but during COVID-19 those numbers were severely reduced due to the suspension of most volunteers working in the VA health care facilities and those working directly with hospitalized Veterans. For the safety of staff, patients and the volunteers themselves VAVS worked with facility leadership to determine where volunteers were most critically needed and how they could most efficiently be utilized.

As reports continued to highlight the growing use of telehealth, Sabrina C. Clark, Ph.D., Director, VA Voluntary Service, considered the potential for volunteers to be of service in helping to facilitate access to care using VVC. "Continuing to see more and more news articles about the expanded use of telehealth, I was also hearing about some of the challenges that some Veterans were having accessing the system," said Dr. Clark.

"While they requested a telehealth appointment, I heard stories of Veterans who didn't know how to use the system and subsequently may have to reschedule their appointments for an in-person visit. I just wondered whether volunteers could add any value in a situation like that."

With that wonder and curiosity, Dr. Clark reached out to Kevin Galpin, M.D., Executive Director, Telehealth Services for VA to ask one simple question. "How can we help?" He quickly had an answer that would involve volunteers teaching Veterans how to use VVC, minimizing the potential for scenarios, like Clark described from occurring in the

future. Additionally, this program would come to represent just the beginning for the development of virtual volunteer assignments and the ushering in of a new era of community volunteer involvement in VA healthcare.

Within a few days, Dr. Galpin had assembled an enthusiastic group of about a dozen individuals from VA's national telehealth office and VAVS formed a "Tiger Team" to begin developing a plan for pulling together VA's "Geek Squad". The very first meeting included a small group of college students, who are now part of the Design Team and represent the target group of volunteers for the initial launch of the program. Now with an official name, the Telehealth Veterans Education & Training (T-VET) Program is pulling together all the pieces of this plan and preparing to begin serving Veterans this Fall.

Danielle Nam, Daniel Finney, Will Clark, and Yazmin Wilkins will be the inaugural group of volunteers serving with VHA's National Telehealth Program. All have been active VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) volunteers, with the exception of Wilkins who was a new recruit for this special program. Finney and Nam were both awarded a \$20,000 **James H. Parke Memorial Fund** scholarship in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Named in recognition of the very first Director of Voluntary Service, the Parke Scholarship is funded through member organizations of the VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee and extends stipends to outstanding high school volunteers who serve within the VAVS program. While Clark has been a periodic volunteer over the years traveling to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, this will be Wilkins' first VAVS assignment. Although located in different parts of the country, these active college students will join together to help VA build a first-of-its-kind service for Veterans.

The summer months for VAVS have traditionally seen a number of high school and college students serving within VA facilities. With COVID-19 limiting the involvement of these students, it was a tremendous loss for both VA and these young people.

"The Veterans love having the students at the facility," says Bill Ball, Chief of Voluntary Service at the Palo Alto VA Health Care System, where Danielle served. "They feel very special when the youth visit with them. So often one or more of the students remind the Veterans of their grandchildren, so it means a great deal to have them at the facility," he adds. Additionally, for these "digital natives" any and all technical assignments can be easily fulfilled by these energetic volunteers.

For the students, in addition to interacting with the Veterans; the job-readiness skills they gain and productive use of structured time during the summer was a bonus. And of course, the potential scholarships such as the Parke Award was a tremendous incentive for those of high-school age. Having to suspend these programs was a significant loss for both them and VA, but VAVS was determined to find a way to get them back.

Doing so was not going to be an easy task. It would require that this VHA Program Office do something fundamentally different than what we had done before. That large-scale effort consisted of the development of a portfolio of virtual volunteer assignments, which were non-traditional for a program where volunteers enjoyed the personal interaction with Veterans. On the surface it sounded fairly simple--just find things that volunteers could do at home. But like most everything, nothing is ever as easy as it seems at first glance. For VAVS, it was important that

the program maintain its integrity; meaning that assignments needed to fulfill a need for the Veterans or supplement the support of VA staff. VAVS field teams also needed to be able to accurately account for the volunteer's so that documented service hours were representative of the actual volunteer effort being contributed. Finally, there needed to be supervisory controls over the work to measure quality, efficiency and performance. "Having virtual volunteers is like having employees on telework." Dr. Clark says. "It requires that the work is more structured or minimally, well organized to ensure that you're getting done what needs to be done and that you have the right individuals who can work independently to accomplish it." She adds, "This is a complete evolution for our program and one that we absolutely must make to sustain community involvement in VA healthcare."

The T-VET Program represented a model assignment for such a drastic programmatic shift. First, there was absolutely no doubt about the gap it would fill for Veterans or the support it would provide to staff. Secondly, the Telehealth Program was prepared to provide the appropriate training, supervision, and oversight that addressed the ability to account for volunteer time and ensure that these T-VET volunteers were providing the high-quality service for which VA is known. Furthermore, VAVS felt like there would be a plentiful pool of tech-savvy college students eager to be involved; particularly given that so many schools across the country were suspending onsite classes or offering a hybrid model to include onsite and remote learning.

The additional flexibility in their schedules potentially allowed the T-VET Program an opportunity to involve students over the age of 18 in a meaningful service activity. With limited on-campus social activities

and restricted in-person gatherings being commonplace across the country, VAVS decided to tap into the public service motivation that we have seen in young people across the country over much of 2020.

Needless to say, this has been a very special year. For each of these four students, their on-campus college experience was suspended due to the pandemic and none have returned back to their campuses. When the initial idea came about, Summer 2020 was just approaching, lockdowns and physical distancing had been going on for months and it continued to feel “like the world was standing still,” one of them noted. Uncertain what the Fall would bring, it seemed like each was ready to try something new.

When presented to **Danielle**, she was immediately excited and started thinking about the training that would be required, enthusiastically coming aboard. She was in Boston at the time, finishing up her first semester at Harvard College not knowing that when she returned home to California she would not be going back. Danielle has kept herself busy practicing her harp, although she can no longer entertain the facility’s hospice unit, which brought her, the patients, families and the staff considerable joy. She spoke eloquently about this experience during this Fall’s TEDxVeteransAffairs virtual event, entitled “Now More Than Ever,” where viewers also had the opportunity to hear and appreciate her beautiful artistry on the harp. She has been actively involved in assisting with the recruitment and training development for volunteers in the T-VET program, as well as participating on a workgroup with VAVS staff from across the country to consider other new assignments for youth.



Danielle Lam, Voluntary Service (VAVS) Volunteer

Daniel reacted similarly, having continued to volunteer at one of VA’s outpatient clinics while in college at Winthrop College in Rock Hill, SC. Coming from a long legacy of civic-minded leaders, Daniel is the grandson of the late Ernest A. Finney, Jr., South Carolina’s first African-American Supreme Court Justice. Also a TEDxVeteransAffairs speaker alum from the 2019 series “What’s Your Why?,” Daniel spoke of him fondly. When asked why he would want to be part of this program, he says “This is what Papa would want me to do... it’s what he would do.” Undoubtedly following in his grandfather’s footsteps, Daniel was inducted to the Council of Student Leaders during his second year at Winthrop College, which sits in the same small South Carolina town where his grandfather made history almost 60 years ago. On January 31, 1961, Ernest A. Finney, Jr. was the lawyer who represented the Rock Hill Nine, a group of nine African-American



Daniel Finney, Voluntary Service (VAVS) Volunteer

men arrested for staging a sit-in protesting the segregation of McCrory's Lunch Counter. Daniel, like his grandfather, holds a spirit of service and kindness to everyone he meets that resonates through him and his magnetic smile.

He has fulfilled a number of assignments throughout the Columbia VA Health Care System but holds as his most memorable experiences those where he just had an opportunity to sit down and eat lunch with a Veteran.

Likewise, it didn't take much convincing for Will, either. With plans to return to California State University- San Bernardino in the Fall for graduate school, this sounded like an interesting summer activity for this Maryland resident and college athlete. Ultimately, Cal State was one of the first university systems in the country to announce the suspension

of on-campus classes for the 2020-2021 school year and then that feeling of "what next" was upon him, too. "The coronavirus is making everyone just stop and pay attention to what's important," Will said. "I literally no longer had any plans, so I figured that maybe this was something that I was supposed to pay attention to. Right now, maybe this is what's important." Confronted with having to severely pull back his normally active social life, Will started a blog about his basketball experiences and began conducting online interviews with individuals about overcoming life's challenges. Now writing a new post each week and interviewing people from his own former high school coach to veteran professional athletes, Will is using his platform to work with boys ages 13-17, as part of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.'s EMBODI (Empowering Males to Build Opportunities for Developing Independence)

Will Clark, Voluntary Service (VAVS) Volunteer



program and is enrolled in graduate school at Towson University. Closer to home, Will's keeping his fingers crossed that there will be a basketball season as he rounds out his final two years of NCAA eligibility. Playing for the Towson Tigers would be a dream come true, but for now he's looking forward to being part of the T-VET team.

Yazmin, the remaining member of this dynamic quartet of T-VET volunteers is a student at Middlesex County College in New Jersey. Seemingly unbothered by any sense of isolation, Yazmin is enjoying being at home studying and spending time with family. A creative spirit with insatiable curiosity, Yazmin is an explorer and conquering new things is her entertainment. The T-VET Program spoke directly to her sense of adventure, but beyond that she was intrigued by the opportunity to help others. Before COVID-19, Yazmin volunteered at Elijah's Promise, a Community Soup Kitchen in New Brunswick, NJ. When speaking about this experience, she says, "I loved hearing people's stories and just learning about their lives." Majoring in Psychology, Yazmin believes that this work with VA "will help me with my people skills," she says. To be around Yazmin and watch her interaction with others, it's hard to see any challenges she has in that area. She has an authentic warmth and openness that will easily translate to the program and a genuine desire to be of service. In addition to learning more about telehealth technology, when asked about her favorite part of being involved in this volunteer initiative, she quietly and politely says, "I just really like helping people. Anything I can do to help others is great. "

As telehealth continues to grow, we anticipate the need for more T-VET volunteers and the development of more virtual volunteer assignments for those who are



Yazmin Wilkins, Voluntary Service (VAVS) Volunteer

looking to serve Veterans. COVID-19 has brought with it an opportunity to broaden and build our services in ways we had not imagined. In addition to allowing those volunteers who have spent months away from the facility to fill these new roles, we look forward to welcoming new people and partners to the ranks of VAVS.

As for T-Vet , with these four talented student pioneers, an operational process, and a dedicated support team of VA employees; we look forward to giving Veterans even more choice and ease of access in their care. Furthermore, the opportunity to expose our college students to cutting-edge technology and have that personal connection with Veterans (although in a virtual space) is truly the essence of what most people hope for in their volunteer experience – an opportunity to learn, to serve and to make a difference.



DISNEY VOLUNTEERS AND VIRTUALITY AS A CHALLENGE

By Susana Tassara, Supervisor,
Corporate Citizenship at The Walt
Disney Company, Argentina

Disney VoluntEARS, Disney's international corporate volunteer program, aims at inspiring habits and values that contribute to the well-being of communities. Through this program, created in 1983 in Anaheim, California, company members from all over the world give their time and expertise to brighten the lives of kids and families in need, and help strengthen communities around the world. In Latin America, **Disney VoluntEARS** works continuously with different NGOs of the region, inviting company members and their families to help in different projects.

During this pandemic, social distancing has posed a challenge for the program, and it was necessary to rethink and adapt the strategy to develop initiatives that could be carried out fully online. This led to the first phase of the virtual implementation of the skill-based volunteering program, in which the company offers talent and skills of their members to strengthen social organizations. Some of the projects carried out by teams of volunteers, who devoted their time and skills to provide solutions to new problems affecting social organizations, focused on adapting in-person community programs to the virtual modality, helping optimize remote work for organization members, and designing communication plans to contribute to the entities' fundraising strategies.

Also, with the purpose of uniting, integrating, and providing virtual company during this special time, together with the HR Learning

"The volunteer program is a place to meet and join others, and this initiative allows us to virtually share things that are part of our lives, helping us connect with others and our emotions."

Belén Urbaneja, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility, Brand Management, and Diversity and Inclusion, The Walt Disney Company Latin America

& Development (L&D) team, the project "L&D VoluntEARS" was launched to promote internal volunteering and boost values, such as support and cooperation among company members. This initiative invites employees to create short videos in which they can share knowledge, skills, experiences, or personal projects that can inspire their peers in order to discover their common passions and hobbies, know each other better, and learn from others.

With 37 episodes produced to date, contributors share activities as diverse as cooking, yoga, gardening, and drawing from their homes. "The volunteer program is a place to meet and join others, and this initiative allows us to virtually share things that are part of our lives, helping us connect with others and our emotions," says Belén Urbaneja, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility, Brand Management, and Diversity and Inclusion at The Walt Disney Company Latin America.





In turn, when considering volunteering as a tool to develop skills, Disney found in this initiative the opportunity to strengthen and discover new skills in participants. While preparing the episodes, the L&D team provides support to participants to discover together the personal history behind what they want to share, discover what skills or abilities are involved in putting the content together, and which of those need to be developed or strengthened in order to work on them.

Participants so far agree that the experience has helped them develop skills, such as communication and creativity, while also allowing them to increase their self-confidence and courage to share their passions with others. "I can summarize the

most positive aspect of the initiative with four verbs: participate, share, communicate, and collaborate," states Patricio Fierro, Disney employee and project participant. Romina Jaime, another contributor, adds: "The initiative allowed us to get closer, show our passions, and get to know better other Company members. By seeing their interests and discovering the diversity of tastes and hobbies, we feel closer."

In the second stage, **Disney VoluntEARS** aims at expanding the program to the community, so that the experiences of volunteers can be shared with social organizations that, in turn, provide support to the community. "That exchange will enrich both sides, strengthening social organizations and also volunteers themselves," concludes Urbaneja.



**AN INTERVIEW WITH
DEEDAR GUERRA,
VICE PRESIDENT OF
CNV MOZAMBIQUE**

Can you tell us a bit about your organization and how it was first established?

The National Volunteer Council of Mozambique (CNV) was formally established in 2008. It was a direct result of a joint effort that initially began in 2001 involving the government's Secretariat of State for Youth and Employment (formerly known as the Ministry of Youth and Sports), United Nations Volunteers, national and international organizations from various sectors. The objective of this partnership was to promote volunteering in Mozambique, with emphasis on the National Youth Council, National Teachers Organization, Forum Women, Red Cross, VSO, Scout League and other grassroots organizations.

CNV was created to be the connective platform and the official interlocutor for the various institutions and people who carry out and promote volunteering in Mozambique.

In terms of vision, we work for a Mozambican society where volunteering is assumed by all as a civic duty and recognized as a driving factor for the country's development – all within an enabling and encouraging environment for volunteers.

Our mission is to mobilize and coordinate all organizations and actors, who carry out and promote volunteering in Mozambique, for their organized and qualified action, as well as influencing decision-making that foster the creation and adoption of policies that foster volunteering.

Currently, we have around 130 member organizations and Provincial Volunteer Councils in all 10 provinces.





Can you tell us about CNV's key volunteering initiatives?

Our organization has three key priority areas. First and foremost, we advocate for the valorization of voluntary effort and work to ensure an enabling environment for volunteers in Mozambique. To achieve this goal, we lobby with government agencies and other entities nationally and internationally to improve standards for volunteering and to enable formal recognition of volunteering as an integral part of our society. CNV also provides the platform to highlight and recognize the value of volunteering and the contribution it makes on sustainable development in Mozambique. To achieve this, we regularly host discussions to improve the quality and impact of volunteering and ceremonies to recognize the achievements of volunteers in our country.

Another one of our priority areas is strengthening the skills of volunteers and their organizations. In this vein, CNV has been looking for training opportunities aimed at improving the performance of volunteers and their member organizations in relevant topics. We strive to continually update our approaches and adjust to the current context of the country. Thanks to the precious support of the government, partners and more experienced member organizations, such as VSO and Red Cross, we have been able to expand the scope of our training programs. Some topics that we have covered include volunteer management, gender and social inclusion, disaster risk management, climate change, social accountability, volunteer law and regulation and resilience preparedness.

Our last priority area is the mobilization of all segments of society to engage in volunteering. Our focus here is to ensure that people from all walks of life are aware of



the importance of volunteering. We work to engage them in carrying out concrete actions for their community and the country as a whole, especially in response to emergencies and other pressing needs such as natural disasters, humanitarian crises and health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic.

What are some of CNV's milestones and accomplishments?

In the advocacy front, CNV was the catalyst and lead contributor for establishing the national Volunteer Law in Mozambique. We have organized several national volunteer meetings and roundtables to discuss important issues in volunteering and to develop new proposals to help boost the volunteer sector. In recognition of the impact of our work, CNV is a permanent

guest of the Intersectorial Committee for the Development of Adolescents and Young People, led by the Prime Minister, which comprises of key actors who participate in the youth policy operations in Mozambique. Currently, we are in negotiations with the government for the institutionalization of the National Volunteer Award and its inclusion in the annual budget of the Secretariat of State for Youth and Employment starting in 2021. We are also working with the government, UNV and other relevant partners to establish a National Volunteer Program in the country.

We have also had great success in our training program to expand the skills of volunteers and their organizations. From 2017 to 2019, we have trained over 5,000 volunteers nationwide, across a variety of subjects.





Some of our notable moments include the mobilization and coordination of over 15,000 volunteers to respond to the tropical cyclones that devastated our country in 2019. Volunteers assisted in collecting and distributing food and other basic necessities, establishing housing and sanitation infrastructures in resettlement zones, providing psychological support, aiding in family reunions and more. Most recently, we mobilized 5,000 volunteers to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Mozambique, what are some of the greatest challenges that volunteers and volunteerism face?

Unfortunately, in Mozambique we are still struggling with weak institutional capacity in implementing proper laws and regulations to protect the rights of volunteers. Volunteers are often devalued and do not receive the

recognition they deserve for their work.

We also struggle with our technical capacity as volunteers are not given the proper support and specialized training to effectively carry out their work on the community level. We also face technological limitations, lacking access to computers, the internet and electricity.

Lastly, due to the predominance of informal volunteering, it has also been difficult for us to monitor and measure the impact of volunteering in our country.

How has CNV responded to COVID-19? In what ways have you had to pivot your programs to adapt to the pandemic?

COVID-19 was the second consecutive blow to CNV's plans, at a time when the country was trying to recover from the negative

impacts of the 2019 tropical cyclones. We sought to fit the volunteering response to COVID-19 to align with the government's strategy. From the beginning, we mobilized volunteers from across the country who worked in coordination with health authorities and other sectors to carry out various response efforts. Volunteers were deployed to raise awareness about the virus, distribute PPEs, food and other health goods and services. They also worked to sanitize public spaces and provide provisions for technological solutions for the various fronts. To best mobilize our volunteers, we intensively explored the usage of digital media to plan and coordinate activities, as well as to share results.

You mentioned that you have been investing in low-cost, sustainable technological solutions. Can you tell us more about these solutions and how they have impacted your community?

One of CNV's priorities for 2020 and beyond is the promotion of technical/qualified volunteering. With this in mind, we sought to encourage our member organizations and volunteers to create technological solutions aimed at combating COVID-19, following the guidelines established by the official authorities.

In addition to the production of homemade masks and visors using locally sourced materials, there were initiatives to produce soap using recycled cooking oil. Other organizations have designed several prototypes of hand washing equipment with foot-operated handles. We have had success in promoting homegrown food production and other income-generating activities within households. The impact of these innovations has been positive, both in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and in mitigating the side effects of confinement. It is estimated



that more than 5 million people across the country have already benefited from these solutions.

Tell us about one of your favorite memories while working with CNV.

In November 2017, VSO invited our organization to be a partner for the implementation of a project called Volunteers for Development. Its goal was to train approximately 500 volunteers from all over the country in 4 thematic areas, all within 5 months. Our main role was to mobilize and manage the volunteers and serve as facilitators to this process. We developed a selection criterion for choosing volunteers for this training program, observing several factors such as gender balance, territorial



representation and inclusion of marginalized people. This challenge was enormous because CNV was still in the initial phase of our revitalization process. Our scope was limited, with little reach outside Maputo, the capital city. It was almost impossible to reach our goal, much less meet the required criteria because the country is large and inclusion is a culturally rooted challenge.

However, with much effort and dedication, guided by dialogue, humility and professionalism, the project went smoothly and on schedule. At the end, we were able to identify 521 volunteers for the training program, all of whom met the selection criteria. The accolades I received on several occasions from the beneficiaries, leaders and

VSO, was immensely rewarding and was the first clear sign of approval for my leadership capabilities.

What motivated you to join GNVL?

Day after day, I have recognized in IAVE a great excellence and professionalism in terms of coordination and management of volunteering matters. My aim is to have better opportunities to add value to my leadership skills and to have access to a package of tools and support that can help improve the performance of CNV. I joined GNVL because I can see the potential in achieving our goals through our involvement with the network.

What do you hope to see for your organization and volunteering in Mozambique in the next five years?

I hope to see a strong and well-functioning CNV with governance, management tools and practices that are based on internationally accepted standards. I also hope that CNV will be well-connected to the global volunteering agenda and grow in our technical volunteering, oriented towards responding to the demands inherent to the SDGs. Lastly, it is my hope that there will be an increased appreciation for volunteering within our society.



The National Volunteer Council of Mozambique (CNV) is a member of IAVE's Global Network of Volunteering Leadership (GNVL).

Learn more at networks.iave.org

NEWS FROM THE WIDE WORLD OF IAVE

VIRTUAL IDEATHON

Earlier this month, we had the pleasure of partnering with the Emirates Foundation to bring the global volunteering community our very first Virtual Ideathon. This idea-based hackathon brought together volunteers from around the world to produce the best thinking to advance volunteerism in the medical sector, volunteerism for mental health support and volunteerism to support the vulnerable, specifically in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of 281 applications from volunteer organizations in 81 countries, 24 teams were selected to compete in this 3-day event. The teams were gathered virtually and were asked to develop actionable and scalable solutions to challenges across the three central themes. The following organizations were each awarded the grand prize of a \$25,000 USD grant to implement their ideas in their communities:

- Ruach Tova* for Volunteerism in the Mental Health Support Sector
- DeedMob for Volunteerism in the Medical Sector
- The Volunteer Center of Trinidad & Tobago* for Volunteerism to Support the Vulnerable

A big congratulations to the winners and a huge round of applause to all the teams who participated in this exciting event! Special thanks goes out to our strategic partners who engaged as judges and mentors to help make this event a success!

WELCOMING RUTH LEWIN AS THE NEWLY APPOINTED IAVE BOARD CHAIR

We are pleased to announce Ruth Lewin as the newly appointed Chair of the IAVE Board of Directors. Ruth has over 40 years of experience working in the non-government, government and corporate sectors. She currently serves as the Head of Corporate Sustainability at Discovery Health, headquartered in South Africa. Ruth is a leader for the complexities and opportunities we face today, one who will no doubt bring compassion, wisdom and a keen sense of strategy to IAVE as we embark on the next chapter of our work. Please join the rest of the IAVE Board and Secretariat team in both celebrating Ruth's appointment and welcoming her to what is our large, diverse and passionate family!

DEVELOPEMENT OF IAVE'S 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN UNDERWAY

We are currently in the process of developing our Strategic Plan for 2020-2025. We are working with key stakeholders to draw on their knowledge and insights to chart IAVE's course for the next 5 years. We look forward to sharing the new Strategic Plan in the first quarter of 2021.

GLOBAL VIRTUAL FORUM SERIES: VOLUNTEERING TO ENABLE CHANGE AND CREATE A BETTER WORLD

Since July, IAVE has welcomed hundreds of participants from 80+ countries to our Global Virtual Forum Series on "Volunteering to Enable Change and Create a Better World". Based on the subthemes for the postponed 2020 World Volunteer Conference, the series covers a wide breadth of topics and issues that are affecting the global volunteer community today. So far, 6 out of the 7 virtual forum sessions have been completed, covering the following topics: Community Resilience, Future Leadership, Tolerance & Inclusion, Volunteering in the Digital World, Corporate Volunteering and Measurement & Impact. All the sessions have been recorded and are available on-demand at www.iave.org/virtualforums2020. The final session will focus on Volunteer 2030 – New Paradigms (December 9). Learn more and register to join at www.iave.org/virtualforums2020.

VIRTUAL MEMBERS MEETING

Our member meeting is going virtual this year! We invite all IAVE members to join this interactive meeting to get important organization updates and hear from the Executive Director and members of our Board. This is a great opportunity to engage as a member and ask any questions you may have for our leadership. [Learn more and register to attend at bit.ly/iavemem](https://bit.ly/iavemem).

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY 2020

The theme for IVD 2020 is Together We Can Through Volunteering. COVID-19 has devastated lives all around the world and volunteers have played a crucial role in spreading awareness and bringing much needed relief to our communities. Unfortunately, there is a lack of recognition for volunteers, particularly for their own wellbeing and access to proper health care. This year, we will not only thank the tremendous impact volunteers have made to the pandemic response, but will also shed light on the difficulties and needs of volunteers during the pandemic. Join us, as we celebrate volunteers and the work that they do around the world!



International Association for Volunteer Effort

VOLUNTEERING
TOGETHER

*Making a difference to
people and communities*

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