

# India Volunteering Conclave 2019 Report



## INDIA VOLUNTEERING CONCLAVE 2019

8-9th August 2019  
[www.vconclave.in](http://www.vconclave.in)



2019  
TRANSFORMING  
EDUCATION

Knowledge Partner



**The India Volunteering Conclave 2019**  
**8-9 August, 2019**  
**The Claridges, New Delhi**

### **Introduction:**

The India Volunteering Conclave 2019 was held on 8-9 August 2019 at the Claridges Hotel, New Delhi. The event was aimed at bringing together policymakers, Volunteer Involving Organizations (VIOs), private sector, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), academia, and volunteers together on one platform to share good practices, discuss innovative ideas and recommend strategies and policy interventions for promoting volunteerism and youth participation in development processes and nation building.

The overarching objective of the conclave was to provide a platform to all those who participated to discuss and recommend strategies for strengthening and promoting volunteerism in India. Other specific objectives included:

- To discuss the latest trends in volunteerism and facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices amongst the policymakers, VIOs, the private sector, civil society, and volunteers.
- To identify, share, and co-create innovative approaches to strengthen volunteering infrastructure in the country.
- To discuss opportunities for integrating volunteers in the implementation of development schemes and programmes.
- To provide an opportunity for building effective partnerships among government, the private sector, civil society, academia, and bi-lateral/multi-lateral agencies to promote volunteerism.
- To provide an opportunity for outstanding volunteers to share experience and showcase their achievements.

### **Opening Session**

Day 1 of the conclave started with a short film on the volunteering journey of District Youth Coordinators under the on-going Gol- UNV Project- Strengthening NKYS and NSS. Following this the chief guests of the day shared their thoughts and insights on the conclave and the concept of volunteering in India.



**Welcome Address – Mr. Asit Singh, Joint Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India**

Mr. Singh acknowledged all the chief guests and organizers who made the conclave possible. He highlighted details of the National Volunteering Registry, which is also part of the 5-year plan, which will soon be launched. He acknowledged that after the formation of the National Youth Policy in 2014, there has been a focused effort towards motivating young people to engage in community development. As a case in point, he detailed out that the appraisal has shown that the 29 UN volunteers placed in 29 districts around India have performed exceedingly well. The second phase of this same effort will cover 58 districts. Mr. Singh said that very few countries have conclaves dedicated to volunteering and this has been made possible because of the efforts of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, UNDP, UNV, and other key partners. He concluded his address by reminding the participants about the concept of “service before self”. He applauded the 4.4 million NYKS and 4.0 million NSS volunteers who have been doing excellent work in line with the Prime Minister’s vision of focusing on the youth of the country.



**Address – Ms. Shoko Noda, UNDP Resident Representative**

Ms. Shoko Noda opened her address by stating that contributions by young people are essential for sustainable development and without their participation India cannot achieve the SDGs. India has 600 million youth and there is a need to tap into this potential. Volunteering is a powerful way for young people to get sense of civic engagement, she said, sharing her own story of being a volunteer during Kobe earthquake in Japan. Globally 1 billion people volunteer every year and India is no different. She further highlighted that volunteering is embedded in Indian culture and community, and volunteers have been instrumental in strengthening many development programs. Ms. Noda applauded the Government of India for making volunteering program available engaging millions of youth and acknowledged the spirit of selfless service and nation building that volunteers contribute to. She further pointed out that through these experiences volunteers learn communication, leadership, and problem solving skills enabling them to work with a wide range of people to tackle challenges. The UN remains committed to building inclusive and resilient communities where marginalized groups are heard. In this context, nurturing local volunteers is a good way to bring unheard voices to the fore. Ms. Noda pointed out that there is lack of data on the impact of volunteerism on development and that the UN resolution calls upon member states to gather data on this to understand how volunteering can contribute to achieving SDGs. She closed her address by thanking all volunteers who play a part in advancing peace and development around the world.



**Key Note Address – Ms. Upma Chawdhry, Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India**

Ms. Upma Chawdhry opened her key note address by congratulating UNV and UNDP for organizing the event. She said that the MoYAS has a unique relationship with UNV, which supports strengthen NYKS in 58 districts of the country. She shared that other nations are looking to the volunteering experience of India to see how it can be emulated in their settings. She further added that youth are the most dynamic and vibrant sector of population. Since India is set to become the world's youngest country by 2020 and 65% of the population is under the age of 35 years, India has a demographic potential that can give the country an unprecedented edge. She urged all present at the conclave to work towards converting this potential into action. The potential of youth in India is both a unique opportunity and a challenge, she said, and for the country to benefit from the youth, it is essential that India and its economy has the ability to support the young labour force and recognize the youthful nature of the country. She further added that it is not new to tap into youth to meet development challenges and that the country has historically been engaged in volunteering. Community service is in the fabric of the country, which is apparent in the concept of *Shramdaan* – the gift or donation of labour for the community. Young volunteers have been delivering values and services to the community for many years in India and the present ecosystem provides ample opportunity to take this further. Ms. Chawdhry pointed out that the Government of India has been conscious of the fact that youth volunteers are critical human capital and they are also an integral component of many national flagship schemes. The government runs two of the largest youth programs in the world – NYKS and NSS. The NYKS alone has a huge network of 1.75 lakh youth clubs throughout the country and engages youth volunteers in a variety of activities. Bharat Scouts and Guides, NCC, Bharat Nirman Volunteer, and *Swachagrahis* are other examples of youth groups that contribute towards national programs such as the Integrated Child Development Scheme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Jal Shakti and others. In addition to government programs, there are also several NGO and private sector programs that also engage volunteers for community development. The youth of the country is enterprising and equipped with knowledge and skills, and they have access to information with click of a

button. This is an ideal situation for advocating civic engagement and volunteering for peace and development. She advised that youth volunteerism should not remain spontaneous and sporadic. Rather it should be transformed to long-term volunteering efforts. Ms. Chawdhry pointed out that there is a unique opportunity in all departments to include volunteerism into their 100 days agenda. She closed her remarks by saying that the MoYAS looks forward to receive the outcomes and the deliberations of the Conclave.



**Opening Address – Mr. Kiren Rijju, Hon’ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India**

Mr. Rijju began his opening address by motivating the audience to begin celebrating International Youth Day 2019 with the start of the conclave. He reiterated that youth of the country is energetic; and there is a need to harness the potential so that they do not turn into a liability. He acknowledged that it is a challenge when youth say that they are jobless, but that can be channelized as doing one’s job towards society and the planet. He stated that volunteering is ingrained in Indian culture and that there needs to be a focused effort to ensure this concept reflects in our behavioural pattern. The various programs that departments are launching have the potential to trigger positive changes in youth. He added that volunteering is such a concept that ensures that no one is jobless, and youth always has something they can engage in. It is important that volunteering is looked at in the right spirit and we understand it in the context of our culture, so that it can transform into fruitful action. He mentioned the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan as a case in point, which only got attention when the Prime Minister spoke about sanitation in the country. He urged volunteers to take up issues sanitation and health that they can contribute to by volunteering, which can trigger significant positive changes for the country. He said that the government is launching various programs with the youth in mind and it is important that young people come together for social change. He suggested that collective action would have a much bigger impact than isolated action. He further highlighted that UN Volunteers and the Government of India are working in tandem when it comes to volunteerism. He mentioned that he was impressed with the work of volunteers he met recently and commended them on their enthusiasm and energy. This synergy between enthusiasm and

youthful energy can ensure that volunteers are engaged from every section of society and from every age group. To keep this synergy going he said that it is important that young people work with an absolute sense of participation. He further said that for any scheme to be successful it is critical that all citizens come forward with a spirit of volunteerism. Without the spirit of volunteerism, a lot of these schemes might remain in papers and just as a thought and might not be able to transform society the way it was envisaged to. He pointed out that everyone has a job, but they should also go the extra mile to bring changes in their neighbourhoods and society. It is important for people to stretch themselves beyond their call of duty so that things can actually become better on the ground. Mr. Rijiju added that India has a lot of stories to share and lots of Indian youth are making contributions in other parts of the world, also. At the same time, he suggested that there is a need to relook at the National Youth Policy to see how it can include the UN agenda, the achievement of the SDGs. Acknowledge the MoYAS's mandate to bring transformational change to youth, Mr. Rijiju said that it is the collective responsibility of every section of society to encourage volunteerism.

After the address Mr. Kiren Rijiju Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports released the Report on Social Media for Youth and Civic Engagement. Mr. Rijiju also launched the pilot project on Volunteering Journey of NYKS and NSS Volunteers by felicitating some of the outstanding volunteers from various parts of the country.



A Bharatnatyam dance performance was presented by Mr. Revanta Sarabhai on using Art for Activism and Social Change. The presentation highlighted various dimensions of social inclusion.



## Plenary Session: Integrating Volunteerism into the National Development Processes



The session on integrating volunteerism into the national development process was led by 5 key speakers with the moderator being Ms. Emiliya Asadova, Programme Analyst, Asia and the Pacific, UNV. Each key speaker shared key insights into the topics and then took questions from the participants.

### **Opening Statement: Ms. Emiliya Asadova, Programme Analyst, Asia and the Pacific, UNV**

Ms. Asadova opened this plenary session by pointing out that when it comes to volunteerism there are many policies and programs that have been put in to place; however, it is difficult to establish if these are enough to enable the full potential of volunteerism. She urged the group to think about if existing volunteering programs recognize the full potential of youth volunteers. Adding that India has one of the largest youth volunteering programs and that India is one of the few countries where volunteerism had been part of the 5-year plans, she said that the scenario is ripe for volunteers to really make an impact in national development. Similar to India, Cambodia also runs such volunteering programs to benefit communities, she said. She also added that globally and regionally there aren't established reporting mechanisms for volunteering programs and as well as systematic analysis or evidence on the impact of volunteerism. She asked the panel to input and discuss how volunteerism can contribute to development in a holistic way taking into consideration policy changes that can accelerate national development. She referred to the regional consultation on the Regional Consultation on the Plan of Action for Integrating Volunteerism into the 2030 Agenda held on March 26, 2019, which included more than 80 representatives from the Asia Pacific region. At the consultation the most common recommendation made by various stakeholders was on the need to integrate volunteerism to national development strategies and sector strategies. She closed her statement saying that the panel will try to



dig deeper into what could be some answers or successful practices vis a vis strengthening volunteerism to maximize the development efforts.

#### **Remarks – Mr. Kamal Kishore, Member, NDMA**

Mr. Kishore spoke about volunteerism from a disaster management perspective by bringing to the fore 3 key points to further develop volunteering in disaster risk management. He pointed out that India has seen many deaths as a result of disasters, and while early warning systems have greatly improved this scenario, there is a need to acknowledge the role of volunteers in helping out in such situations. In post disaster situations, it is always local volunteers who take efforts to the last mile. He reminded the participants that during the Tsunami a large number of Indian volunteers travelled to other countries to work alongside local volunteers to support communities to recover from the effect of the natural disaster. He stated that there is evidence to show that volunteerism to an integral part of disaster risk management. However, there is very little effort to systematize volunteer databases and put together an inventory of volunteers with skill sets that can be deployed during disasters. He said it is important for all stakeholders to think about how an integrated system can be developed so that different organizations and groups do not work with different lists and databases. He went on to add that it is often assumed that volunteerism is about physical labour and does not require specialized skills, but that is not always the case. He reminded the audience that to be a volunteer one can also stay at home, without being in the field, and use one's skills to do something important like contribute to logistics and planning, build an App etc. From disaster risk management perspective, he shared that volunteers have been instrumental for disaster response and rescue but not for risk reduction. He urged that organisations interested in engaging in volunteers for post disaster response and relief should also consider using volunteers for disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

#### **Remarks – Ms. Upma Chawdhry, Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India**

Ms. Chawdhry shared that over the years, volunteering has emerged in the form of high-quality services and has benefited society in many ways. She pointed out that, while volunteerism is typically unpaid work, a structure of incentives needs to be built which can result in the development of the volunteering ecosystem in India. Ms. Chawdhry highlighted that volunteering is a popular way of engaging for the youth and can be strategically leveraged by offering them opportunities to address specific development issues. Ms. Chawdhry urged participants to think about the need to capitalize on volunteers and how their potential can be best used. She went on to add that India does not have a policy specifically for volunteering and that while the National Youth Policy mentions volunteering but within a larger framework. Secondly, she pointed out that some people consider volunteering unworthy because it is unpaid. It is important to understand that there is a lack of common understanding about what actually constitutes volunteering. This is augmented by the fact that there exists very little documentary evidence about the impact of volunteerism. It is also important to acknowledge that volunteers face many challenges especially in disaster settings, and sometimes the significance of volunteering is undervalued, especially in rural settings. Because of the lack of a systematic documentation and data collection process, the contributions of volunteers often tend to get lost and they do not get adequate recognition and incentives. For example, NSS volunteers do get a certification but it does not link them up to further opportunities within the system. At the moment, voluntary work is not measurable and tangible, as there exists no repository to

track these efforts. There is an opportunity to push for a demographic dividend of youth as part of an organized system of volunteers.

#### **Remarks – Mr. Amarjeet Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development**

Mr. Sinha highlighted about community connect and community collectives, without which it is difficult for a programmes/schemes of the government to reach its expected goals. He pointed out that there is a need to understand volunteering in the larger framework of institutions, and not just as individual effort. He highlighted that delivery of programs meant for the poor would be more effective if the poor themselves provide the interface through a collective. Collectives can be highly effective frameworks to institutionalize volunteerism, because the core of a collective is the social capital that comes from the fraternity. He gave the example of the Gram Swaraj Abhiyaan, which works in a mission mode and achieves program outreach through community mobilization, where frontline workers ensure service delivery to deprived households within a timeframe. The program was able to reach 65,000 villages in 4 months because of community collectives and volunteers. He further reiterated that volunteerism should be situated within existing institutions and programs instead of setting new systems and volunteers should be leveraged and included optimally. He stated that technology provides an opportunity to reach out to the last person in the last mile, and should be integrated into volunteering systems. Volunteers can also hold governments accountable through the power of technology and knowledge, with social media a prime case in point. He concluded his presentation saying that the spirit of volunteerism has the potential to transform nations.

#### **Remarks – Mr. Chek Lim, Deputy Director-General, Department of Youth, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, Kingdom of Cambodia**

Mr. Lim shared that Cambodia is a small country with a large population of young people and this presents challenges such as equipping them with skills to enter the workforce as well as opportunities such as engaging them in the socio-economic development of the country. In order to harness the potential of this group, it is important to address in-school youth as well as out-of-school youth. In this context, South-South cooperation gives a great opportunity to learn from India. He added that Indian youth have visited Cambodia and there is great hope that this will translate to cultural and socio-economic exchange between the two countries and friendship will be renewed, especially in the next generation. The Cambodian government is committed to mobilizing young people and promoting the volunteering network at the grassroots levels. This has been done by piloting initiatives where youth have learnt to mobilize community resources and explore avenues in which they can replicate successful models at the national level. He closed his session by stating that accreditation of volunteerism is important and that all stakeholders are looking at best practices to see how it can be implemented in Cambodia.

After the presentations Ms Emiliya Asadova moderated the discussions. She stated that there are several similarities between how volunteerism has been engaging youth in, both, India and Cambodia. She added that technology is an enabler and historically both countries have rich volunteering cultures, and technology can improve the volunteering landscape and maximize volunteering. Volunteering is becoming a behaviour and young people themselves are driving this change.

Ms Asadova asked the panellists to weigh in on how would volunteerism can be looked at as a policy option for national development and what are some of the areas or gaps in development where volunteering will be a game changer.

Ms. Chawdhry responded stating that volunteers can work further through structures like the Panchayat and other formal arrangements. The government, NGO, and corporate sectors that are pervasive should be tapped into to formalize volunteerism. It is also important to acknowledge that volunteerism is mushrooming in several places, and the next step in the journey is documenting and building of a repository.

Mr. Kishore's responded that volunteering in the disaster risk management sector, volunteering is not a luxury but a necessity. Because of this there is a need to better systematizing the process. Currently there are state and district level disaster management plans but they do not include a volunteer database or skills based volunteers, even if volunteers end up playing a major role when disaster strikes. A second point he made was that the disaster risk management sector has not made the most of government structures and there is a need to look into how NSS and other such volunteer groups can be leveraged better in a structured way. Finally, he added that technology can be a game changer when it comes to systematizing volunteerism.

Mr. Sinha inputted that women get integrated into development policies and its implementation through mechanisms such as collectives and perhaps similar formations with youth will allow volunteers to link to institutions as part of the integration process.

Mr. Lim added that in the Cambodia context, it is top priority for government-based opportunities, and thus a national youth policy was developed. The Cambodian Prime Minister is committed to mobilize young people and promote building voluntary networks at the grassroots level. He further said that at the political level there is an on-going discussion on how youth can be mobilized at the central level and can work as a team at the community level in a project mode.

The moderator then opened the floor for questions and comments from the audience.

Questions and comments	Responses
1. There are no national platforms for volunteers where volunteers can look for opportunities to volunteer, how can we address this?	1. Currently in India this platform exists but only in terms of a repository of volunteers giving organizations the opportunity to pick and choose. It is a good idea to create a space where organizations can post their opportunities.
2. Can a volunteering structure like the NSS be introduced at the school level as well?	1. NCC and Bharat Scouts are examples of how volunteering is being encouraged in school. NSS is only in +2 in schools, it should be expanded to get national coverage 2. In schools, volunteering can be

	<p>an assisting mechanism to promote equality of education.</p> <p>3. Career guidance and career counselling is also something that can be explored.</p>
<p>3. Is the government willing to partner with private entities for volunteering?</p>	<p>1. CSR is a good way to encourage volunteering in the field. However, NYKS and NSS already provide social capital, perhaps the private sector can bring other capital such as projects, finances etc.</p>
<p>4. How can we make volunteering more relevant?</p>	<p>1. Volunteering is already relevant but the main issue is that it lacks visibility. Some interventions can include recognizing volunteerism, document it and have more tangible measurements and recognition of skills.</p> <p>2. Volunteerism should be a continued engagement. The architecture of volunteerism should include a long-term approach through either apprenticeship or other opportunities.</p>

The moderator concluded the plenary by summarizing the main points. Following are the key issues/suggestions that emerged from the Session:

- There is an acute need to institutionalize volunteerism in the development planning holistically;
- Knowledge and technology could be the acceleration tool to maximize the reach of volunteerism to furthest behind communities and ensure civic engagement;
- Documentation of volunteer contributions and creating repositories is highly needed for evidence on volunteerism;
- Strengthening of volunteerism in the disaster risk reduction work need to be enhanced (as currently exists only in the response part);
- The ecosystem for promoting volunteerism for development in the country is highly needed;
- Volunteerism could be used as a nudge or trigger to address some of the developmental challenges.

## Technical Session 1: Creating Data and Evidence and Measuring Economic Values of Volunteer's Work

This session was moderated by Mr. Alok Rath, Global Head for Knowledge for Impact at VSO International. He opened the session by stating that measuring the economic values of volunteer's work has been a global topic for several years now. This has been an area where both governments and civil society have been trying to find ways to



better understand how volunteers contribute to the different aspects of program development that they get associated with, both institutionally and as individuals. While a range of opportunities exist to measure this, stakeholders are collectively struggling to shed more clarity to the actual contributions and impact that volunteerism has. It is estimated about a billion people across world volunteer, of which only about a million volunteer within the organized sector. One estimate by a study done by ILO and John Hopkins University suggested in early 2000, that the contribution of volunteering to the economy could amount to USD 1.4 trillion.

### Address by the Chair – Mr. Brijendra Singh, Deputy Director General, MOSPI

Mr. Brijendra Singh addressed the issue of economic value of volunteerism by referring to the system of national accounts. He said that conceptually all voluntary work done through organizations should be captured in this system, but currently that is not happening. Since volunteers work is unpaid, monetized value is not capture through the system. Another issue that exists is that even if volunteers work is captured, it will be difficult to segregate its components in the accounts.

Mr Singh stated that while the Labour Force Survey could have been a platform to capture this, but in India it is not possible to use it to understand volunteering. Additionally, as per UN guidelines, governments should have different account for non-profit and volunteering work, and while an effort to do this was made between 2008 and 2010, the valuation part was left aside. Some other data sources that can collect information about volunteering work are occupation-based surveys, NSSO, Labour Force Survey, and Minimum Wages Administration Statistics.

### **Address by Co-Chair – Mr. Shailendra Sigdel, Statistical Advisor, UNESCO**

Mr. Sigdel acknowledged that the volume of volunteer work is huge; nevertheless, the sector is facing a lack of systematic data collection on this front. Once data is collected on this, it is also important to use this information for planning and monitoring. For this to be useful statistics should be comparable, and the methodology for it cannot be changed from year to year.

### **Remarks - Ms. Sudipta Bhadra, Programme Officer, ILO**

Ms. Bhadra stated that as per ILO, volunteer work is that which is non-compulsory and non-paid, which is done for at least one hour. At the same time, it needs to be differentiated from cheap or free labour and should not be mixed up with concepts of internships or apprenticeship. Voluntary work also has a component of production for others and can have a component of market and non-market units, can be for profit or not for profit and can be via Self Help Groups. Further work is considered voluntary only if it is done in households other than one's own or that of a family member. At the same time, labour done in prisons or as part of community service, or anything done as part of educational or training programs when you are associated with an organization or institution is not considered voluntary work. When it comes to data collection, there is no uniformity in sources from different countries and in most cases, it is not done in a systematic way. The reasons for informality of data collection in different countries is different, where as in Europe volunteering happens as a culture thing and in Asia Pacific there is an expectation attached that it helps in a career or job. Further it is seen that more women volunteer, but mostly in the informal sector.

### **Remarks – Ms. Vijaya Balaji, Managing Director & CEO, Toolbox India Foundation**

Ms. Vijaya Balaji spoke about the programs and initiatives as part of India @ 75 and asked if there is a way to tap into the demographic dividend of skilled, trained youth and how that talent can be harnessed. She further added volunteering can contribute significantly to the country's GDP. There is also an opportunity to tap into corporate volunteers. Approximately 32 million corporate employees would be interested in volunteering in areas that have an impact on the SDGs. Ms. Balaji also reiterated the questions around how volunteerism can be standardized and how data can be collected, since there is a social and economic angle to volunteering. India @ 75 has also mapped different volunteering sectors to understand if volunteers per hour delivers the value of USD about 16-18 per hour. India @ 75 also has developed a national volunteering grid with standardized network across corporates to look at a figure for volunteering that is universally acceptable and can be a benchmark that can be validated and become an established practice. She closed her presentation by saying that there are many benefits to the social returns of volunteering, which is still anecdotal and hard to document.

### **Remarks - Dr. H. Srinivas, Director General, V.V Giri National Labour Institute**

Dr. Srinivas shared that volunteering has a role to play in the achievement of all SDGs. He agreed that the means and sources of collecting data for volunteering is limited. He outlined that volunteering work can be understood in three aspects: 1. by measuring volunteer's work 2. with the means and sources of collecting data and 3. economic valuation of volunteer's work. This data can support in countries and organizations by opening spaces and creating new opportunities and partnerships, attracting more qualified volunteers, and

increasing recognition and public support for national/international volunteering and advocacy. He explained that choosing the right method for valuation is important and should be done based on suitability, breadth, conceptual clarity, objectivity, and feasibility. He added that volunteering could be considered a form of work for which market wages can be determined, as approximately 1 billion people volunteer every year globally. Furthermore, Global volunteer workforce has an economic value that is equivalent to 2.4% of entire global economy and 17.5% of world-wide government final consumption expenditures. Going forward, it is important for organizations and countries to look at how volunteering can improve people's participation and inclusion in decision-making; build people's capacity to achieve various SDGs; strengthen relationships to encourage effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, develop partnerships to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources in support of the achievement of the SDGs.

### Paper Presentation – Ms. Rebecca Boon, Singapore International Foundation

Ms. Boon's paper presentation focused on the calculation of SIV economic value contribution. She shared that the rationale for measuring SIV economic value is to recognise the value volunteers bring in to a project based on specific services rendered through their volunteer roles; demonstrate to funders the real value of the project; and reflect the fair value of the in-kind contribution of volunteers on audited financial statements. She further detailed out that the framework for SIV EVC includes parameters such as preparation time, travel time, service duration, and estimated hourly wages. During her presentation she further highlighted the data that has been collected on these fronts.

Following are the key issues/suggestions that emerged from the Session:

- Efforts should be made by governments to capture all voluntary work done through organizations in the national accounting system.
- Governments should have different account for non-profit and volunteering work for economic valuation
- Choosing the right method for valuation is important and should be done based on suitability, breadth, conceptual clarity, objectivity, and feasibility.
- There is no uniformity in data collection sources in different countries and in most cases, it is not done in a systematic way. Efforts should be made to make data collection sources uniform. Further, parameters need to be measured for collecting data on volunteering.

### Technical Session 2: Social Impact of Volunteering



The session aimed at going beyond the economic value of volunteering understanding the social impact of volunteering. The session was moderated by Mr. Sachal Aneja from Voluntary Service Overseas, chaired by Ms. Foroogh Foyouzat, UNICEF Deputy Representative, India, and co-chaired by Mr. Juan Pablo Ramirez-Miranda, Section Chief and Programme Specialist for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO.

#### **Remarks – Mr. Sachal Aneja, VSO**

Mr. Aneja began by saying that the world faces many daunting challenges, some of them being poverty, inequality, climate change, destruction of natural resources, religious conflicts, lack of education or economic opportunity, diseases, and water scarcity. The SDGs which have been designed to address these challenges, acknowledge the participation of volunteers to address these challenges.

#### **Remarks – Ms. Foroogh Foyouzat, UNICEF Deputy Representative, India**

Ms. Foroogh added and acknowledged that more attention, serious consideration, and research is needed to understand the social impact of volunteerism. This can be done by first recognising the power of people in contributing to change, the power that people have when they come together for one purpose. As an agency mandated to work with children (from 0 to 18 years of age), while progress is noticeable in the area of child rights, efforts need to still be accelerated. One way of doing that is by involving young people. One way the UN does that is through a UNICEF led programme called 'Generation Unlimited' (or GenU). UNICEF has also either launched or scaled up a volunteering programme contributing to protection and realisation of child rights across the globe. In India, UNICEF's focus is on violence against children and the best people who know about it are young people themselves. In Chhattisgarh, in a partnership with NSS, UNICEF reached out to community members with child rights messages, mapped needs and issues of children, documented different forms of violence. In Madhya Pradesh, 2500 volunteers were trained on street theatre to engage with children, parents, and community at large on the issue of child marriage. The role of volunteers, she said, is that of a catalyst and in the session, we will learn about other programmes where volunteerism has brought social impact.

#### **Remarks – Mr. Juan Pablo Ramirez-Miranda, Section Chief and Programme Specialist for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO**

Mr. Ramirez-Miranda mentioned that UNESCO's idea of youth involvement is that youth is a key driver of social change, and volunteerism is a vehicle. India is a young country, while this is a big asset it is also a potential liability. But volunteerism is one way India can invest in its youth. He acknowledged that India has a history of volunteerism through its concept of 'Sewa' and the concept of 'shram daan'. UNESCO works with young people to drive social innovation and change, and the agenda 2030 is an opportunity to think creatively about this – including capturing social impact of volunteerism in line with SDG indicators. UNESCO no longer considers young people as beneficiaries but as partners and allies. He added, that young men and women are not only the future but also the present. UNESCO would like to include the youth in conversations from design to implementation and in the policy agenda, and encourages the establishment of youth spaces (online spaces, safe spaces, concrete spaces for ideation). This is where volunteerism can play a key role. He ended the session talking about Greta Thunberg and the impact she has had, globally.



#### Remarks – Ms Neha Buch, Chief Executive Officer, Pravah

Ms. Buch spoke about how at her organisation volunteerism is not just about impacting the world but also about transforming oneself. She added that the impact of volunteering is not just in the moment but may be recorded 10-20 years later. She then shared a number of stories about what she understands from volunteerism in the Indian context, and how it is heterogeneous. Following that she added that such a heterogeneous concept becomes very challenging to record, assess, and measure. She then spoke about concepts of critical thinking, empathy, and ownership of common spaces through the volunteering lens. She stressed on the fact that volunteering in India needs non-threatening spaces that accommodate failure, should allow the volunteer to connect themselves with the larger society, should help the volunteer learn and build their capacity, and should be challenging, while also allowing the volunteer to hook onto inspiration and be hopeful.

Mr. Aneja resonated with Ms. Buch's point about heterogeneous volunteerism and spoke about VSO's model of blended volunteering which involves skilled volunteers at various levels – community volunteers, youth volunteers, and corporate volunteers.

#### Remarks – Ms. Kinkini Roychoudhary, Principal, Accenture Development Partnerships

Ms. Roychoudhary spoke about Accenture's social consulting wing. As a large youth employer, she said that Accenture recognises the youth's inherent desire to give back to society. She added that Accenture conducted a research to understand how employees are affected by volunteerism and found that retention rates amongst employees who volunteered was 36% higher than those that did not. Another impact, she added, was that Accenture was generating leaders in the development sector as many individuals with volunteering experience would go on to join organisations in the field of development. At Accenture, with a 130,000 employees, the organisation allocates one day every month to volunteering. She added, that one must also measure how the lives of the volunteers have changed as part of the social impact of volunteering. As part of the Accenture Volunteer Community (VC), which is spread across 43 cities across the globe, specific tasks for volunteers are carved out using a consultant's analytical and research skills. Ms. Roychoudhary spoke about another project called 'India at 75' (a flagship project by corporates) – which aims to define volunteerism including the involvement of skilled retired individuals, non-skilled workers etc. Accenture is also in the process of launching a digital platform that aggregates volunteering opportunities to connect individuals, corporates, and civil society to help identify opportunities. Ms. Roychoudhary spoke about how Accenture is putting together a volunteering framework and SOP for members of CII (most of which are MSMEs – who don't know much about volunteerism).

#### Remarks – Mr. Ajay Pandey, Co-Founder, Thinkthrough Consulting

Mr. Pandey began with mentioning that the concept of volunteering differs a lot globally. In India too, he said, there is diversity in the definitions of volunteering. But the best social impact of volunteering is true social disruption in society (from *Satyagraha* to polio eradication), he added. He spoke about a personal example of how change brought about by volunteering often gets institutionalised. This, he said was a long term social impact of volunteering. Ajay said, a company in Vietnam has constructed 92 schools only through

corporate volunteering. What we lack today, he added was a framework to measure the impact of such kinds of volunteering. Measuring disruptive change through volunteering is the need of the hour. Ajay spoke about the Commonwealth Youth Development Index, and its indicator on political and civic participation. In the Middle East governments want to do well on this indicator, however in India the indicator is incredibly high – which portrays just how cultural volunteering is in India. When looking at India, he said, scale is a big issue and that can be achieved only by the involvement of the youth.

#### **Remarks – Mr. Naval Kishore Gupta, Country Head – Restless Development**

Mr. Gupta delivered a presentation on the work Restless Development is doing in India. He presented the organisation's 'dimensions of change' which focuses on personal development of the volunteer, the development impact of their volunteering work, and the volunteer's role as an active citizen after the project is over. He then spoke about a tool to measure impact of a volunteering programme, which focuses on – 1. inclusion created by the volunteering programme, 2. innovations brought about through the volunteering effort, 3. transfer of ownership back to the people, 4. role of volunteer as a role model, and 5. long lasting positive change brought about in the geography through the volunteering effort. Mr. Gupta then spoke about a few examples of work that young people have done in India through Restless Development. He concluded by saying that volunteering needs – programmes to be designed by young people, have safeguarding standards, provide incentives, and provide certification and recognition.

#### **Remarks – Mr. Prithviraj Franklin, Global Lead, Community Welfare, Cognizant Outreach**

Mr. Prithviraj Franklin (from Cognizant Outreach) presented a white paper on a case study as part of an employee led volunteering programme run by Cognizant. In India, he added, Cognizant employees volunteer across 10 cities, with nearly fifty thousand people volunteering annually. He said that Cognizant categorises volunteers into three categories – tourists, travellers, and guides. 'Tourists' being those who volunteer a couple of times, 'travellers' being the ones who have volunteered more than ten times, and 'guides' being the ones who volunteer regularly and motivate others to volunteer.

The session ended with Mr. Foroogh summarising of the key points. The key issues/suggestions that emerged from the Session are:

- India has a rich history of volunteerism and there is a need for harnessing this social capital.
- Keeping in view the diversity of Indian society volunteering must reflect this heterogeneity
- The benefits and social returns of volunteering are still anecdotal and there is a need to document it systematically.
- Investing in volunteering programmes is important for promoting volunteering and harnessing the benefits.
- Volunteer Involving Organizations should endeavour to design and create non-threatening space for volunteerism.
- While designing volunteering programmes, the mobility of populations should be taken into account;
- Volunteerism fosters connectedness among different segments of society.
- There is a need for inclusion of elderly into the volunteering.

- Volunteering can be a tool for delivering social sector programmes at a large scale in India.
- A structured framework to measure the social impact of volunteers should be developed.

### Technical Session 3: Roundtable on Accreditation Framework for Volunteers

The third session commenced with a paper presentation by Santanu Bhowmick on Gram Sabha as a democratic forum for the youth to participate in policy formulation and its effect on the grassroots level. The paper focused on youth participation in policy making process of rural India at the grassroots' level.



The paper focused on understanding the status of voluntary youth participation in policy making at the grassroot level and exploring the reasons for lack of interest among youth in Public Policy making process. The presenter raised pertinent questions regarding the interest level of the youth in the policy discussions and discussed some of the approaches to encourage volunteerism for developmental issues.

The second paper which was presented by Dr Nawab Mehetab Nasreen focused on highlighting the roadblocks and supporting factors for volunteering in India. The paper titled 'Why Volunteers can't Volunteer' focussed on critical challenges faced by the youth while volunteering. The paper was based on a survey in a sample group of 5000 diverse people in the age bracket of 14-50 years. The paper discusses the 6 attenuating factors and 3 synergising factors for people to volunteer, it also included reasons for people to drop out of volunteering. attenuating factors mainly included parental and societal support, academic curriculum, lack of knowledge about existing organizations through which they can volunteer, inability to sustain an organization started (drop outs), Less penetration of innovative practices in volunteering like online volunteering. Synergising factors includes a flexible accreditation framework and organizational support. These factors emphasized the need for a flexible accreditation framework for volunteers to bring more people into volunteering and sustain the existing volunteers.

Post the paper presentation, the discussion was opened by Dr. C. Samuel Chelliah, Assistant Programme Adviser, NSS who started by introducing of National Service Scheme (NSS) and its key objective. Dr Samuel oriented the house with the key mandate of NSS, according to which every volunteer enrolled as NSS Volunteer needs to complete the community service of 240 hours in 2 years and then complete one special campaign programme (residential camp) where they need to adopt and stay in the community for required hours. He further informed that out of 120 hours, 30 hours are dedicated on orientation of the volunteers and the rest 75% is involved in the community work which are oriented towards various government flagship programme.

Talking about the functioning of NSS, Mr. Samuel informed that from 2015 onwards, initiative has been taken towards introducing a common uniform pattern of NSS certificate across the country. There has been a lot of confusion over the uniformity of the certificates

as NSS is implemented by nodal ministries. In many states, NSS is managed by education and since education is state subject, every state has their own mechanism, for example; in Kerala it comes under education department, In Tamil Nadu under youth and sports ministry, In Karnataka under Ministry of Youth affairs and sports and In Haryana under education department.

Highlighting the importance of accreditation framework, Dr. Samuel highlighted the key aspect of connecting the accreditation mechanism with career prospectus for youth where he shared some of the innovative steps which Tamil Nadu and Kerala has taken. In Tamil Nadu for instance, for NSS Volunteer, there is a 2% mark which is reserved in police department for the position of police constable. While registering for bachelor's in education, there is reservation of 5% for NSS Volunteers. Kerala Government has moved a step ahead by reserving 2% marks in Government exams for NSS Volunteers. Further, If any NSS Volunteer has attend national level programme, they get 3% mark, and NSS Volunteer who has represented their state in Republic Day parade will get 5% mark. Any NSS Student who has represented their country in International exchange are further given 7%. Kerala is only state, where they conduct entrance exam to enter NSS.

Mr. Samuel further highlighted the efforts of the Government towards motivating youth through platforms like National Youth Awards. However, he also opined his view of how accreditation system should be made part of the various departments in order to promote volunteerism. Accreditation needs to be translated in terms of career prospectus. They need recognition from AICT, UGC, HRD to recognize volunteers.

Ms. Ashraf Patel, who has been working with various youth based organization and have led many youth makers programme stressed on understanding how volunteering builds community and impacts the young people who participate. Before talking about accreditation framework, Ms. Ashraf laid emphasis on looking into how volunteers are accrediting themselves, to understand how volunteering is enabling young people to acquire skills and grow. She further spoke about two key programmes which have been promoting youth engagement and building their understanding and skills - The *Jagrik* Project which has been conceptualized for capacity building of young individuals to enhance their understanding of rights and challenge as they refl-act (reflect+act) in the real world.

Youth Workers was another important segment that Ms Ashraf spoke about. The youth workers remain an unrecognized section of volunteers which also need to be accredited. The key aspect of designing a learning journey for the youth worker is also very critical. She emphasised on an urgent need to create indicators for self-leadership to transform youth workers, young people and their journeys.

One of the critical aspects which was also discussed in length was the need of "Incentivizing" the work of youth volunteers and how accreditation could outline the same. Ms. Shivali Lawale, Director, Symbiosis School of International Studies highlighted the importance of advocacy and communication towards popularizing the concept of volunteerism. She further highlighted the importance of incentivizing young people where we could create platform for recognizing volunteers. This would specifically help to ascertain how the work of volunteers is measured and rewarded. Ms. Lawale, further gave instance of internship projects which not only encourage students to participate in the development process but is also inbuilt in the structure.

Mr. Santosh Abraham, Vice President from NASSCOM Foundation highlighted the importance of creating a consortium of likeminded organization which can be built to promote accreditation of youth volunteers. He talked about the joint effort of MYGOV and NASSCOM Foundation towards building literacy skills of Volunteers through - Digital Literacy Volunteering. Mr. Abraham further highlighted the need of a framework which will capture the learning journey and outcome of the volunteers. He further talked about some innovative approaches which could be designed to keep volunteers engaged. For example, creative methods like putting forward a coin system as an incentive for the volunteers to work selflessly and regular sessions to inspire people to promote volunteering

Dr Saigita Chitturu, Assistant Professor, TISS University raised pertinent questions regarding the sustainability of volunteerism. She gave the context of NSS, where she raised her concern for the NSS Volunteers post their two years of engagement with volunteers.

Discussions were also focused on engaging with private stakeholders and how do we map the engagement of private stakeholders to promote and incentives volunteerism in their regular programme. Mr. Clark Cu from UNV Cambodia office highlighted the need for engagement with private stakeholder partners.

Following are the key issues/suggestions that emerged out of the session:

- Ensuring sustainability of the volunteering programmes- once volunteers complete their volunteering assignment.
- Mapping of youth aspiration and voices from field- need to understand what kind of accreditation framework is required.
- Creating a consortium of likeminded organizations which can support the Government in designing the process of accreditation process.
- Designing mechanism and advocacy and communication programme towards promoting Volunteerism
- Incentivizing Volunteerism – designing innovative approaches, awards and programmes.

#### Technical Session 4: Roundtable on Innovative Practices on Volunteering

The fourth technical session engaged with different stakeholders to explore the innovative practices of engaging volunteers in a range of activities such as community outreach & awareness raising, social mobilization, service delivery, training, research, and advocacy. Such practices promote out of the box thinking and low- cost solutions to the developmental challenges of the local communities.

The session started with a short introduction by the Chair of the session, Ashish Khare, Principal Project Manager at MyGov India and Emiliya Asadova, Programme Analyst, Asia and the Pacific, UNV outlining that the session will be sharing and hands-on learning about successful innovative volunteering practices. The Chairs also noted that hopefully the issues and challenges of replication and scaling up of innovative volunteering could also be



touched upon. Mr. Khare continued with showing the film on the MyGov's initiative-Self4Society which is a tech-based platform for volunteers to log hours and share experiences. "Combined strength, connectedness and contribution are the three main factors for volunteerism," he said, on considering volunteerism as an integral activity for social change.

He further shared initiatives like Social Eligibility Check and Jal Sanrakshan to educate, engage and empower the society with the help of volunteers.

The first speaker of the session, Meenakshi Gupta, co-founder of Goonj, focused on bringing an equitable outcome of volunteerism and mentioned volunteers as strong pillars of her organization. She talked about how volunteers can become stakeholders in community development and work towards sustainability. She integrated that volunteerism must be treated with dignity and not just as an act of charity. Mobilizing resources from urban places to rural places can reduce the economic and social gaps.

Ms. Loy Nelson, COO, Make A Difference spoke of NGO's presence in over 23 cities. She threw light on the need to improve the ecosystem for children living in shelter homes. She applauded the value volunteers bring to the organization in achieving the goal. She shared their operational models and suggested that bringing customized and unique operational models in volunteering sector can strengthen the overall impact. She shared the three values that *Make A Difference* fosters in their community of volunteers, *First being-* Cause above Self, *secondly-* Leadership through ownership and *Third-* Sense of Family which helps them in enhancing team cohesion and ensuring long-term engagement of volunteers.

It was followed by an address by Shalabh Sahai, Co-founder of iVolunteer illustrating insights on collective volunteering. He discussed the different motivation factors for volunteers and volunteer-led organizations to create quality programs. He talked about *iVolunteer Awards*, one of their platforms to recognize and rewards volunteers, youth champions and organizations who are doing exceptional work through volunteering.

The next speaker, Mr. Deepak Prabhu Matti, Global Lead, Cognizant Outreach shared innovative methods that can be employed through corporate volunteering. He talked about the importance of recognizing the work done by volunteers for their development, retention and growth.

Mr. Venkatesh Murthy from Youth for Seva shared that his organization focuses on the values and ethics of volunteerism based on the principles of pluralism and harmony. He laid emphasis on utilisation of discussion forums, digital marketing, partnerships and mass media in promoting volunteerism. He concluded by adding, "Doing good should not be a substitute for being good."

## Valediction



The Valedictory Session for the day was led by Ms. Argentina Matavel Piccin, Representative, UNFPA. The moderators of the four sessions summarised the session deliberations as under:

**Session 1:** Volunteers contribute significantly to nation development but there is no agreed upon framework to measure their contributions. There is a need to bring visibility to the social as well as economic impact of volunteering. Volunteering occurs in different forms in different sectors and the questions remain: what to measure and why? There are a number of existing definitions and tools by different agencies, and there is a need for a simpler and universally applicable way of capturing impact.

**Session 2:** Social disruption is how social change can be brought to day-to-day life. It is important to bring SDGs into everyday life, and break them down at local levels. Different kinds of volunteers need to be categorized understood. Investment is really important, but not just financial; and technological investments and innovations are key. How can social change be attributed to volunteerism?

**Session 3:** There remains many questions on how volunteerism can be accredited. While some endorsed career prospective as motivation for volunteering, experience in soft skills motivated others. It was suggested that a mapping study be done to understand what kind of accreditations volunteers actually want? Volunteering needs to be about youth empowerment and about the spirit of volunteering for the sake of volunteering.

**Session 4:** Volunteers can be equipped through learning, training, and skills development. This can also be achieved by building values that engage and retain volunteers. There is a need to delve into who is a volunteer and who is not? And what is the cost of a volunteer? When does volunteering stop and become something else start? When it comes to



volunteerism, innovations should focus on volunteers believing they are leaders, who can provide stories, ideas, and feelers from the ground. They are also those who create new projects and create something new. What kinds of rewards are possible at local, organizational, and national levels?

Ms. Argentina Matavel Piccin shared that everyone agrees on the importance of involving young people as change agents. She shared the experience of UNFPA in engaging young people who bring energy and passion to the workplace. She also highlighted their contributions in the organizations.

Referring to the summary of the four technical sessions, she observed that there is a thread of commonality in all four sessions that focused on measurement, value, and impact. There is a need for recognition and accreditation that gives young people more opportunities. Volunteering can churn energies of young people to something valuable and raise a sense of belonging in them. Organizations and countries can then channelize this energy to create value. Volunteers can also contribute significantly to national-level, peace and security. It is important to have those platforms and opportunities ready so that young people can continue to explore volunteerism as a way to bring value to national development.

---End of Day-1---

## Day 2

### Dance Presentation – Revanta Sarabhai on Using Art for Activism and Social Change

The day began with a dance presentation by Mr. Revanta Sarabhai. He touched upon the fact that through Bharatanatyam as a centuries old dance form, it can be used to express



ideas about modern day issues. In fact, he stressed, that there is a need to modernize the stories that classical dance forms tell in order to reach out to young people and remain relevant. He performed a few dance pieces to illustrate how Bharatanatyam can be used as a form of expression about modern day issues.

Before moving on to the first panel discussion of the day, the UN Secretary General's address for International Youth Day 2019 was read out to the audience.

### Panel Discussion: Transformational Impact through Corporate Volunteering



This panel discussion brought together various stakeholders from the corporate industry and the government to engage in a conversation based on corporate volunteering. Mr. Deepak Prabhu Matti, Global Lead, Cognizant Outreach talked about the significance of *Nudge Economics*. Ms. Maniti Modi, Co-Founder, Connect For apprised the audience about the working of her organization and how it

primarily focuses on bridging the gap between corporates and volunteers considering the important role corporate volunteering serves in India. Taking the discussion forward, Ms. Maya Vengurlekar, COO, CRISIL spoke of the company's initiative "*Change The Scene*" which

enables employees to volunteer at any NGO of their choice. Ms. Gayatri Subramaniam, Former AVP-L&D, CSR, HDFC Life, reflected on the history of Indian Companies Act and the evolution of volunteerism and CSR in India since 2009. She emphasized on the need of integration of NGOs, the government sector and corporates to create a network that will render the transformational impact needed. Ms. Rahat Bahal, Vodafone-Idea Foundation shared the initiative taken to develop leadership skills by coming up with creative short- and long-term commitments for employees to volunteer.

Mr. Armstrong Pame, Director (Youth Affair & Sports), Government of Manipur spoke about his initiatives as an IAS officer in his home state of Manipur. Armstrong Pame, gave a powerful speech to emphasise the importance of volunteerism. He spoke about public volunteering in the case of building a 100 km road which connects Manipur, Nagaland and Assam. Pame also looked back at his experience of getting cellular and broadband network to Tamenglong district, Manipur after his letter to Mukesh Ambani went viral.

The discussion revolved around innovative ideas along with the issues and challenges with corporate volunteering in India.

### **Transformational Impact of Volunteering**

This was a group work based event wherein discussion was held in a group distributed among four tables on four separate sub topics which were discussed by the distinguished guests. Discussion on each table was summarized in the end to draw meaningful conclusions.



The participants of table 1 discussed on- "*Decoding the Social Returns of Volunteering*". In the discussion, the panel identified four stakeholders of Corporate Volunteering, namely Community, Volunteers, Corporates and NGOs. The panel also came up with suggestions to release a ranking for CSR units of different corporates to give importance to the CSR units of these corporates.

The participants of table 2 had a discussion on the topic- "*Making SDGs count in volunteering programs*". The discussion mainly focused on the substantial development goals and inscribed issues like menstrual hygiene, personality development, celebration of cultures, etc. After a lot of inputs on various arguments the table drew a conclusion to reduce the huge communication gap between NGOs and Corporates and creating a platform for the same. Thus, the discussion ended on a note to increase volunteerism but with trust and understanding.

The participants of table 3 discussed "*Global Strategies for local issues. How to marry the two in volunteering?*" The panel came up with an idea to promote volunteerism as an

essential skill in one's career graph. The discussion drew upon the conclusion that if two people apply for the same position in a big corporate, preference would be given to the person who has active experience of volunteering because they have more ground- work experiences and face real-life challenges.

The participants of table 4 discussed “*Volunteering Marathons vs Long Term Volunteering Program.*” The panel agreed that the youth should be inspired to move out of their comfort zone to create social change. The discussion came to an end with a consensus on the idea that volunteer marathons are the best place to experiment and give the volunteers a flavour of the cause whereas long term volunteering programs are deeply embedded in India's corporate world.

*Table 4 involved in a rigorous discussion on Volunteering marathons vs Long Term Volunteering programs*

Summary of Discussions: Mr Arun Sahdeo, Country Coordinator, UNV summarised the discussions. The key issues that emerged from the session are:

- Different corporates are at different stages in volunteering life cycle. Multi-national firms are more evolved as compared to Indian firms. It was suggested that a mentoring programme may be initiated for corporate entities.
- Many corporate volunteering programmes are directly contributing to SDGs. It will be good if guide/toolkit on aligning corporate volunteer programmes with SDGs is developed by UNV.
- A cohort/consortium of corporate entities may be created for supporting corporate volunteering.
- Technology is the great enabler and must be harnessed to promote corporate volunteering.
- Building Champions within organizations could be instrumental in generating more interest among corporate employees;
- Creating platform for facilitating corporate employees to volunteer is an important step towards promoting volunteering.
- Documentation of good practices as well as creating data and evidence on corporate volunteering programmes should be promoted. To start with a Compendium of Good Practices may be compiled.

### Panel Discussion – The Theme of the International Youth Day 2019 – Transforming Education

This session was chaired by Ms. Vrinda Sarup, Former Secretary, Department of School Education ad Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development and co-chaired by Mr. Amrish Rai, Convener, RTE Forum.

Ms. Sarup opened the session by introducing the panellists and guiding the group to make the discussion more relevant by focusing on issues of accessibility and inclusion.



#### **Remarks – Mr. Saktibrata Sen, Room to Read**

Mr. Sen opened his remarks by reminding the audience that the key objective of education is transforming the world around us. Education gives society an opportunity to understand who we are and where we are placed in the larger context. Education allows people to make an informed choice about the world around them. Right now being educated is a basic requirement but there is also a need to engage with the deeper semantic spaces of education if transformation is to take place. Education should be a means through which young minds become conscious of who they are and become prepared to collide head on with the realities of today. There is also a need to make informed choices about the literary interventions that currently exist. A key area that needs to be looked into is neuroscience and what it tells us about information processing abilities and the ethics of information processing in an increasing digital world. He expressed concern about how young people are training working memory only to glance through several types of information through various kinds of media, instead of deep analytical reading of all information. Informed choice should be the result of deep understanding. It is important to think and make meaning while reading, not just when it comes to literacy, but also during day-to-day engagement on social media and with the digital world. Mr. Sen concluded by saying that training one's mind to read critically can truly be the first step to transforming the self and the world.

#### **Remarks – Ms. Kamal Gaur, Technical Adviser for Education, Save the Children**

Ms. Gaur opened her remarks by stating that there is a global movement to work with children and get them connected to education. The world over, the stumbling block has been children who are out-of-school and how they can be brought into mainstream education. She added that volunteers could play a critical role in this space by locating out-of-school children and bringing them to school. If this gap is bridged then there is the potential to transform the education sector, she pointed out. Save the Children's Accelerated Learning Model saw some interesting results where volunteers brought children who were out of school to school and took them back home, while also reinforcing what they learnt at school in addition to broadening their horizons about their day to day life and the world around them. Volunteers can be used to focus on hotspots where out-of-school children can usually be found, and organizations and the government can have interventions and interfaces with volunteers to guide them in this. She further added the fact that currently only around 11% of schools are RTE compliant. Additionally, school management committees are lead by teachers and headmasters. There is great opportunity for youth to volunteer in these spaces, which can be small steps to bring the marginalized back to the system. She wrapped up her remarks by saying that young people should tell their own stories in the education space by using interesting storytelling techniques such as dance, art, and other forms to make these spaces more relevant for young people.

#### **Remarks – Ms. Madhu Ranjan, Senior Education Specialist USAID and Neelima Pandey, Core Team Member, Kaivalya Education Foundation**

The representatives from USAID and Kaivalya Education Foundation gave a joined statement during this panel discussion. Ms. Ranjan opened the session by saying that there is a lot of positive work happening in the education space and quoted Kaivalya Education Foundation as being one such effort. Young people themselves are doing a lot of good work and USAID has been working with several partners who transforming lives and communities through

education. She touched on the fact that early grade reading is critical for children to engage in further learning. Ms. Pandey added that Kaivalya is once such organization that engaged youth in a big way. As part of their program Gandhi fellows work with children in a program that was co-designed to improve early grade reading and to leverage youth in schools and within the larger education system. Ms. Pandey also shared an example of how volunteers transform the educational experience for children.

#### **Remarks – Ms Renu Singh, Young Lives**

Ms. Singh iterated the other panellists' remarks on there being a need to scrutinize what is currently happening in schools and classrooms. She added that education does not need to be limited to schools and higher institutes of education, and transformation can happen if all stakeholders take responsibility of the education space to make it more inclusive. There is a need to question if the current system acknowledges young people's aspirations and encourages them to build a sustainable world. She pointed out that the "island of education is estranged from life" and that gap needs to be bridged for education to be more relevant and for community and education to be convergent. She stated that the discussion on transforming education needs to touch on youth mental health issues. Studies show that India has the highest number of suicide rates, and this crisis will worsen unless education also builds life skills. This is an area that both volunteers and citizens can be well engaged in. Furthermore, young people need to speak up about what they need and those points need to be included into the education agenda. The purpose of education, she pointed out, needs to be come from youth themselves. She closed her remarks by saying that the discussion on AI, technologies, and decision making can only take form if we transform the way young people are taught to meet this change.

#### **Remarks – Mr. Ambarish Rai, Convener, RTE Forum**

Mr. Rai opened by pointing out that the current situation at hand is not a learning crisis, but a systematic crisis. There are many issues leading to this such as the unequal opportunities in education, lack of teachers, and the very low compliance to RTE. Currently there are still many single teacher schools, a situation that makes transformational education difficult. He further added that the youth have a big role to play in the National Education Policy, as education truly is a tool for transforming society, and should not be limited to employment. He said that a volunteer's foremost task should be to protect citizens' rights and the constitution in order to make society egalitarian. He closed his remarks by stating that volunteering should be about working with communities to make people aware about the purpose of education and raise voice for the universalization of education.

#### **Closing Remarks – Ms. Vrinda Sarup, Former Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development**

Ms. Sarup summarized the panel discussion by stating that the change agents in the country must centre on youth and there is a need to maintain the vibrant link between youth and education. She touched upon the fact that the surplus of information available today needs to be processed critically to be relevant. She advised that youth must move forward, but with specific egalitarian values. She further added that RTE must be extended to all to make it more inclusive. She reiterated that education can make a big change and volunteers have a key role in making education transformational. She concluded by saying that youth and volunteers should also hold governments, society, and the educational system accountable.

Questions and comments	Responses
<p>What are some best practices in inclusive education?</p>	<p>Sending children with disabilities to mainstream schools</p> <p>Making special schools into inclusive schools and including marginalized schools</p> <p>Teachers need to reflect more and be more engaged in the process of inclusion</p>
<p>What are some thoughts on formal, informal, and non-formal learning in the purview of transformational education?</p>	<p>Non-formal and informal education should not be encouraged. RTE has made it possible for all to have formal education and this needs to be further extended so that it is actually possible. Informal and non-formal systems might lead to lower standards and every child deserves an education from qualified teachers in an inclusive setting.</p>

### Panel Discussion on Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education

This Panel was chaired by Mr. Sanjeev Rai from TISS Delhi and included panellists who weighed in on the current status of inclusive and equitable quality education and the way forward for the same. Before Mr. Rai invited the panellist to speak, he pointed out that inclusion should be looked at through several lenses and the way forward also leads to several forms of exclusion.



#### **Remarks – Ms. Seema Rajput – Technical Specialist, CARE India**

Ms. Rajput opened her remarks by stating that this is the right time to focus on the rights and needs of the youth, and to focus on how their energy can be channelized and invested in. She reiterated the point that the SDGs cannot be achieved without involving the youth, by including out-of-school children, and by ensuring equitable education for girls. When it comes to inclusivity, there is a need to relook at the concepts of safety and security, and broaden its definition based on what it means for different marginalized groups. Currently there are no protection mechanisms or enabling spaces in communities where youth can speak up. Decision makers need to learn how to engage with adolescents to build their leadership skills and critical thinking so that they can deal with authority figures, especially their parents, in a manner that makes change possible.

#### **Remarks – Ms. Alka Singh, Head Policy and Advocacy, Save the Children**

Ms Alka weighed in on the fact that the right start for children is important for each child to understand their space in the world. In this context, it is important to look at conflict induced displacement and how the right start to education can be extended to children in these situations. She further stressed that inclusive education needs to be thought out and made relevant, and the government needs to be involved to take these changes to scale. She added that 90% of a child's brain development happens by the time they are 5, and this is a key reason for the right start. She used the example of displaced population in Chhattisgarh and Rohingya communities in Hyderabad, where giving the "right start" to children is a challenge, but essential. In such situations, she shared that, ICDS and anganwadi centres should be involved. She further added that budgets and policies don't currently address the differences in society and that needs to be tackled. She highlighted that those in conflict situations are the ones who are most left behind and affected by education systems not being inclusive. She concluded by saying that in such situations youth volunteers can get actively involved to bring children to places where they can be connected to education.

#### **Remarks – Mr. Murali Padmanabhan, Gender and Disability Inclusion Advisor for South and Central Asian Region, Light for the World**

Mr. Padmanabhan started his talk by saying that inclusion cannot happen without preparing the ground and the environment, which can in itself be a challenge. From a disability inclusion point of view, there are many things to consider such as infrastructure, services, access, are teachers equipped, if there is a support system, and if alternative communication is available. Another key challenge in the context of disability inclusivity is the attitude, especially vis a vis the respect and perspective towards children with disabilities. He pointed out that children with disabilities are often undervalued, and sometimes overvalued, but what they need is to be taken at face value. He further highlighted that it is important to consider how space people with disabilities are being given for decision-making and if opportunities are adequately being transformed to benefits. This is the reason that youth need to be involved in the new education policy drafting so that people living with disabilities can be mainstreamed. The youth have a tremendous scope for making this possible.

#### **Remarks – Ms. Kanika Sinha, Convener, ComMutiny – The Youth Collective**

Ms. Sinha began by stating that there is a need to broaden understanding of the education that happens outside of schools and colleges also, and what is happening in homes and



communities. There is a need to tackle the binaries of “us versus them”. There is data to show that young people do not experience people who are from different communities, and for many youth, the ecosystems that they exist in are not diverse. This situation makes it easier to stereotype, demonize, and objectify the other due a lack of lived reality and engaging with the other. Thus, it is critical to create cross-border spaces where youth can interact and engage with people from different backgrounds. She gave a few examples of campaigns such as the “Samjho-Toh Express” and the “Samvidhan” game that helps young people can share a common narrative and understand their rights and duties as a citizen. She further stressed that it is important education moves out of classrooms to make it more relevant so that youth can experience and understand other realities and construct new stories ,that are not built on silos. For this to happen youth need to have neutral spaces where they can feel free to express and experience. She concluded by saying that while there are good policies and efforts, there is a need to change attitudes and mind sets and these interventions need to happen at a very young age. Volunteering, thus, can be the first cross-border experience for many young people.

Questions and comments	Responses
How effective is it to use an app to reach out to youth interested in volunteering?	- There is no doubt that social media and apps work. However, it is important to be mindful of those who do not have access to digital technologies. But these platforms are still aspirational. Ultimately, elements of call to action need to be fun and inspirational to engage youth.
How it is possible to reach out to UN and other large organizations for support for inclusive educational programs that are lead by volunteers?	It is important to make a case for your program and to be well informed about existing schemes and programs to see how it can be leveraged. One needs to identify the appropriate entry point based on the existing opportunities.
How can one go about making an inclusive LGBTQI community?	Inclusivity should not be about one or the other community and the question should be: how can we make any space inclusive to all? We need to be mindful of diversity and people themselves have to make these changes by changing attitudes.

## World Café on The Role of Young People and Youth Led Organizations in Transforming Education

Before the World Café discussions, the panel members shared some remarks about inclusivity in the context of people living with disabilities. The moderator for this panel was Nipun Malhotra from Nipman Foundation



**Remarks:** Ms. Pratishtha Deveshwar, Lady Shri Ram College

Ms. Deveshwar responded to the question about the importance of inclusivity in education by saying that 75% of children with disabilities in India do not go to school their entire life. To understand inclusivity in education, there is a need to understand how education looks for children with and without disabilities. Lack of accessibility to educational institutions is the first barrier for a child living with disabilities, and the second barrier is the lack of acceptance. People want children with disabilities to go to a special school, even though the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has a no rejection policy for children with disabilities. Thus, it is difficult mentally and socially for a child with disabilities to attain education. We need to be mindful of special needs and special provisions; and understand that inclusion is multi-dimensional, and many facets need to be take care of.

**Remarks – Mr. Apoorv Kulkarni, Ola Mobility Institute**

Mr. Kulkarni began his statement b saying that for a people with visual impairment a lot of time goes in operational challenges. He stated that, thus, it is important to have a dedicated organization set up to have an inclusive experience. He pointed out that college is not just about reading books and to make the entire experience inclusive, it is important that all instructors undergo sensitization training so that a lot of awareness that is prebuild. He pointed out that computers make it possible for a student with disabilities to keep up with and communicate with peers He acknowledged that technology, that might make learning easier, comes at a price and education continues to not be equal for all. He concluded by reiterating that creativity needs to be developed for students with disabilities, and for that to happen it is important that the majority of time is not spent on operationalization issues.

**Remarks – Mr. Thushar Viradiya, Access Mantra**

Talking about inclusive education, Mr. Viradiya pointed out that deaf people are visual learners and that does not align with inclusive education. Most people with a hearing disability might miss out in an inclusive education space. For this reason, deaf people should have special education so that they do not miss out on quality



education and have the opportunity to have an inclusive college education. Since oralism is the default way of communicating, it is important to have good sign language interpreters. Overall, facilities for inclusive learning have to be improved. Furthermore, the government has to improve access to Indian sign language for the space to be truly inclusive.

### Remarks – Ms. Dinu Raheja, The Global Education and Leadership Foundation

Ms. Rajeha began her talk by commenting on how schools and teachers can be more inclusive. She pointed out that there is a need to change the entire narrative, starting with how we label people. She clarified that if we change the language around disabilities then there is also scope to change perspectives and how different stories can be understood. Teachers, parents, and communities need to work to change perspectives and, thus, change stereotypes. She also iterated that technology can play a big role in changing mind sets as well as making facilities and spaces more inclusive.

The moderator summarized the session by stating that we need to accept that people do live with disabilities, and that acceptance makes it possible to deal with issues head on. He also pointed out that education is the first plank to making the world more inclusive for people with disabilities.

## World Café Discussions

### Teaching Methods Which Are Practical, Fun, And Inclusive



The system is large and flawed at the moment, and the question remains how any of these parameters can be measured. This is important to first create frameworks that include multiple learning styles possible. To make this possible, teachers need to go beyond books and constant capacity building for them is critical. Sign language should be made mandatory during pre-service for teachers, when they are taking their teaching degree. All schools should have counsellors and sign language experts/interpreters. Implementation of policies is just as important as framing of policies. Policies and other frameworks and materials should be developed using the teacher in mind.

### Role of Gender and Identity in Education

The role of women and how they are marginalized was a big point of discussion, especially in the context of education. There continues to be no social acceptance and much insensitiveness for LGBTQI community and there are no safe spaces for young people to come out,



which further hinders the education process. There is no representation from the LGBTQI community in the education sector. The group felt that more visible participation of the community in the education sector, as learners as well as teachers will lead to more acceptance. The point about when the right time to introduce children to issues of sexuality and sexual orientation was also raised to which some shared that normalizing this early on can make way to more acceptance. If there is acceptance in the family and in the society then there will be more inclusion and acceptance in the education society.

### **Menstrual Hygiene and Sex Education**

The group discussed that there is general lack of awareness about menstrual hygiene and sex, which leads to larger problems. The fact that there is no safe space to discuss these issues means that there are no places where these issues can be resolved. The socio-cultural frameworks dictate that both teachers and parents not talk about these issues to children. There are cultural barriers that lead to girls and boys getting different levels and different kinds of information about this topic. The group also acknowledged that there is lack of information about and access to menstrual hygiene products and services, including clean toilets in schools. At the same time, trans-people are not at all included into the conversation about menstrual hygiene. Solutions to these issues need to include changes in policies as well as language. The focus should be on comprehensive adolescent sexual and reproductive health education, which should be relevant for all sexes and genders. Teacher sensitization is also an important part of this issue. The conversation needs to be more experiential and storytelling modes, rather than technical and out of textbooks.

### **Mental Health and Social Emotional Learning**

The group agreed unilaterally that mental health is important for everyone, everyday, and everywhere in the world. For the discussion about mental health to be included into education, families and communities need to be sensitized. Teachers need to impart to children the importance of empathy and the right language to be used. The consequences of not having these discussions in an inclusive manner without stigma are very dark. Friendships and relationships need to be based on respect as individuals. There is a dire need to shift education from the focus of academic achievement to collaborative and inclusive learning modules.



### **Civic Participation in Transforming Education**

The solution to many social issues could be in civic participation through sensitization and active participation in finding solutions to changes that need to be made. Sensitization has to happen both formally and informally, and this needs to happen in schools, families, and governments. This needs to be a collaborative process that focuses on inclusivity. The

transformation that one desires needs to come from oneself and we all need to be the leader in that change.

### Employment and Career Opportunities

The group agreed that while opportunities didn't seem optimal, change was beginning to take place. Personalized education and mission-based education, instead of selecting majors and specifics, was a point of discussion. The point about including education that is relevant and based on soft skills was also raised. Encouraging community-based sets up for education so as to overcome inequities. We need to ensure that we are including skills that we can practice so that we can later connect these skills to jobs.

### Role of Technology and Accessible Infrastructure

Technology has both its pros and cons, and we need to be mindful of the fact that technology does not take over social interaction. But technology has the power to bridge gaps and make spaces more inclusive. The lack of infrastructure and dedicated government bodies to resolve issues of accessibility is missing. The government needs to focus on building awareness at all levels. People with disabilities also need to be more active in voicing their needs to make spaces more inclusive.



### Building Social Circles Without Barrier

We are talking about all existing groups as well as those that we are not aware of. There is a need to first be aware of platforms that exist and then figure out how they can be leveraged and made better to build circles that go beyond barriers. Inclusive interaction and integration of ideas and perspectives is key. A need assessment needs to be made before assuming the requirement and the plans should be formulated based on that. New ways of interaction needs to be identified which can be value-based on through policy. It is important to include and share lived experiences in order to overcome barriers and, build empathy and acceptance for oneself and the other.

### Vote of Thanks



The vote of thanks was given by Mr. Arun Sahdeo, Country Coordinator, UN Volunteers, India. After thanking all presenters and participants for their active participation over the two days, he acknowledged the importance of volunteerism and the role it plays in transforming society. With these words, he declared the India Volunteering Conclave closed.