

# International Volunteer Projects



Voluntary  
Service  
International

[www.vsi.ie](http://www.vsi.ie)



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# About Voluntary Service International VSI

Voluntary Service International (VSI) is the Irish branch of Service Civil International, a worldwide peace movement started in 1920 in the aftermath of the First World War.

Voluntary Service International was founded in 1965 following several voluntary projects in Ireland in the late '50s. Since then, VSI has sent volunteers to projects in over 50 countries worldwide and undertaken a wide variety of voluntary and community work throughout Ireland.

VSI is a membership organisation and all of our current programmes - International Volunteer Projects Programme, Africa Asia Latin America Programme, Teenage Programme, Long Term Volunteering and the Dublin Local Group - are run by working groups made up of volunteers, supported by the VSI staff team. Our Annual General Meeting (usually held in November) elects a National Committee from the membership to oversee the work of the organisation from year to year.





Participants at the VSI Youth Exchange in Donegal, Summer 2009

VSI is a registered charity: CHY 9220. VSI is registered as a limited company, no. 140520, having no share capital.

**VSI is a member of:**

- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Dochas, the Irish Association of non Governmental Organisations for Overseas Development
- Debt and Development Coalition

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# Service Civil International

“SCI, believing that all people are capable of living together with mutual respect and without recourse to violence to solve conflicts between nations, communities or people, works for the promotion of peace” (SCI Constitution).

SCI is a Peace and Solidarity organisation which was founded in 1920 as a response to the tragedy, destruction and violence of World War 1. A group of peace activists came together to work on the reconstruction of a village near Verdun in France, scene of some of the heaviest fighting and loss of life during the First World War. They showed that people from countries previously involved in conflict could live and work peacefully together towards a common goal despite differences of nationality, religion or class. In our work and in our dealings with hosts, volunteers, partner projects etc. we strive to live by the peace and solidarity ethos and try to resolve any conflicts which may arise in a positive and non-threatening manner.

SCI is an international non-governmental organisation committed to the promotion of peace and understanding through voluntary activities. These activities consist primarily of 2 - 3 week long international volunteer projects involving volunteers from all over the world. These projects range from working with marginalised people to ecological, arts and cultural projects, amongst others. Internationally, SCI has consultative status with UNESCO and the Council of Europe, is a member of the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service and the Youth Forum of the European Community. Today SCI has some 90 branches and partners in Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe and North and South America and approximately 10,000 active members and volunteers.

Each branch of SCI is represented at the annual International Committee Meeting of SCI the main decision making body of SCI. The ICM elects an executive committee to manage the affairs of SCI from year to year. SCI has an international Secretariat in Belgium. Working Groups: There are several international working groups, made up of SCI branches, groups, and partner organisations. Working groups are active around a certain theme or region e.g. Africa, The Balkans, Youth Unemployment, Middle East etc. More details from the office.

## The Peace Messengers

The Peace Messengers are busy all over Europe and Asia raising awareness on the peace philosophy and values of SCI among workcamp participants. SCI runs peace messenger training workshops to create trained volunteers that visit projects and run a workshop on peace issues. The peace messengers run seminars and training, and have a website and produce newsletters. These can be found at <http://www.spaceforpeace.net/>

For more details see [www.sciint.org](http://www.sciint.org)

## Vision, Mission and Values

**OUR VISION** - is a world of peace, social justice and sustainable development, where all people live together with mutual respect.

**OUR MISSION** - is to promote peace, social justice, sustainable development and intercultural understanding through volunteering in Ireland and internationally.

**OUR VALUES** - we base all our work on the following values:

- **Volunteering** - in the sense of acting out of self-initiative, without seeking material reward and for the benefit of civil society, as a method and a statement for social change, whilst never competing with paid labour nor seeking to contribute to strike-breaking
- **Non-violence** - as a principle and a method
- **Human Rights** - respect for individuals as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- **Solidarity** - international solidarity for a more just world and solidarity between human beings at all levels
- **Respect for the Environment** - and the ecosystem of which we are a part and upon which we are dependent
- **Inclusion** - to be open and inclusive to all individuals, without regard to gender, race, age, disability, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status, family status
- **Empowerment** - empowering people to understand and act to transform the social, cultural and economic structures that affect their lives at all levels
- **Co-operation** - with local communities as well as other local, national and international actors to strengthen the positive potential within civil society as a whole



# International Volunteer Projects:

Europe, North America, Japan & Australia



# International Volunteer Projects

There are over 500 SCI volunteer projects taking place in Europe, North America, Japan and Australia each year. In the following pages we have listed a few examples of these along with some stories from volunteers who have written about their volunteering experiences with SCI.

Full details and up to date information can be found on our website and search engine. You can also contact the office for more info.

[www.workcamps.info](http://www.workcamps.info)

An International Volunteer Project (IVP) is a unique form of volunteering, bringing together people from different countries, cultures and backgrounds to live and work together with local communities on short-term volunteering projects. The projects are designed to assist and encourage local initiatives that will be continued when the volunteer project is completed. The projects help these groups in their long-term work for a more just and peaceful society. The projects also aim to break down barriers between people and to develop international understanding.

Each project depends on the active participation of all volunteers. The following information will give you a better understanding of the projects.

## Choosing a project

### What kind of work is involved?

There are many different types of work on the projects, including:

- Anti-Racism and work with Ethnic Minorities
- North - South Solidarity
- Disarmament and Peace
- Work with People with Disabilities
- Work with Children, Young People and the Elderly
- Ecological, Environmental and Agricultural
- Projects Focussing on Gender
- Social Inclusion
- Arts, Culture and Local History
- Ideology and Spirituality

## Where do projects take place?

- Albania
- Armenia
- Austria
- Australia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic
- Croatia
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Great Britain
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Japan
- Kosovo
- Kyrgyzstan
- Macedonia
- Moldova
- Montenegro
- Netherlands
- Northern Ireland
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russia
- Serbia
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Tajikistan
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- USA

## Experience and qualifications

The most important qualities you need are enthusiasm, flexibility and willingness to experience something completely new. All volunteers must be 18 or over. Some projects require certain skills e.g. language; these will be stated in the project description. The success of the project depends largely on the willingness of individual volunteers to involve themselves in the group-life by 'mucking in', communicating and making friends with other volunteers and in the local community.

## 'Mixed Age'

The majority of volunteers on SCI projects are in their 20s; there is no upper age limit, each year we host volunteers of every age, including some who are in their 70s. Each SCI branch tries to balance the diversity of the volunteers according to age, sex, nationality etc. on each project. While all projects are open to any age group unless otherwise stated, SCI has designated some projects 'Mixed Age' in an attempt to avoid volunteers over 30 years of age feeling isolated amongst 20 year olds. Volunteers on 'Mixed Age' projects have a broader age range, the aim is for at least half the volunteers to be over 30 and half under. 'Mixed Age' projects are marked in the project descriptions in the search engine.

## Disabled Volunteers

We encourage volunteers with physical disabilities to take part in our projects and offer support where required. Conditions vary between projects, it will be stated in the description if a project is not wheelchair accessible. If you are not sure if a project is suitable for people with certain types of disability or if you would like more specific information on a project before applying please contact us. Please use the space provided on the application form to describe any particular requirements you may have and we will contact you if necessary. Please do contact us if you wish to find out more or if you would like to discuss any aspects of volunteering with us.

## Volunteers with children

We welcome applications from volunteers wishing to bring their children, but do check with the office before applying to be sure that the chosen project can accept children. Please note, under 16s are not insured by SCI so volunteers with children must have their own insurance. Mention will be made in the project description if a project is unsuitable for children.

## 'Pacifist Voluntary Projects' (PVP)

Some projects are 'Pacifist Voluntary Projects' (PVP), meaning there is an extensive study part on peace related issues and/ or alternatively, the work is directly connected to pro-active peace work (public campaigning, peace education etc.). Volunteers on these projects will learn about conflict and non-violent strategies to solve conflicts. These projects are labeled 'PVP' in the descriptions in the search engine.



## Info about the projects

### Costs

Food and accommodation are provided free of charge during the project. Volunteers cover their own travel to the country and internal travel to/from the projects. Volunteers cover their own visa fees if any. Volunteers must pay a programme fee to us with their application (see back of this book for details).

### Getting there

Volunteers have to organise and pay for their own travel arrangements to and from the project. We recommend you make your travel arrangements as soon as you receive the confirmation that you have been accepted on a project. Remember to consider travel costs before you apply.

### Information Sheet

When you have been accepted on a project you will receive a project 'Information Sheet' with arrival dates and detailed travel directions from the nearest large town or city. It also contains more details about the hosting organisation, the work, the local area and travel info and will also include a list of specific items to bring. Usually you will receive your Information Sheet about 4 weeks before the start of the project though in some cases it can take a bit longer.

## What to bring

The 'Information Sheet' will also include a list of what to bring. Usually these are fairly standard items such as sleeping bag, work clothes, gloves, work boots, musical instruments etc. They may also ask you to bring information on similar projects from your own area. Photographs or postcards of your home town/ country, chess sets, playing cards and music are also very popular. Remember the most important thing is to bring plenty of enthusiasm and energy.

## Food and accommodation

As stated above, food and accommodation are provided free of charge during the project by the host at their expense. Usually the group will share the tasks of cooking and cleaning on a rota basis, so bring your favourite recipes with you!

Accommodation is usually basic, for example mattresses in a school hall, camping or dormitories in a youth hostel. There will be at least basic washing facilities. As you'll probably be living in a larger group than usual, don't expect too much privacy.

## Volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

Volunteers wishing to work on projects with or around children, young people or vulnerable adults will be asked to provide two references and a self-signed declaration form confirming the absence of a criminal record. Please ask the office if you are unsure about this. Some projects require police checks, where applicable this is stated in the project description. Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Training will be provided for volunteers working on these projects. Info and documents will be sent to volunteers once placed on a project, if you would like more info please contact the office.

## Leisure and free time

An important part of every project is how the group organises its social activities. After the day's work there will be plenty of time to visit local areas, talk, play music, sing, write postcards, swim, learn local phrases... A lot of activities are decided by the group and you have your say in this during the project.

## Study element/ educational component

There will usually be time set aside to learn more about the issues relevant to the project e.g. on an environmental project, issues related to the effects of global warming may be discussed. If there is a study/ educational component to the project, volunteers are asked to inform themselves about the issues before going to the project and also to bring any relevant information etc. in order to participate fully in the discussions.

## Attending the entire project

Volunteers should not arrive late or leave early. A person arriving late misses the crucial period of orientation and friendly awkwardness as group members get to know each other and the group spirit builds. A person departing early erodes the feeling of solidarity in a group, and leaves the remaining volunteers with a sense of having been left behind for

something more important; they would also miss out on the leaving party. Leaving early may result in the work being left unfinished as there may not be enough people remaining to finish it.

### **Can I do more than one project?**

Yes but as group work requires a lot of energy, take care not to run the projects one after another if you intend to do more than one project. Try to give yourself a week or so in between projects for rest, sightseeing, travel and washing your clothes.

### **Language**

Speaking other languages always helps when travelling but the language used on most projects is English. Certain projects have specific language requirements which are specified in the camp descriptions.

### **Being part of an international group**

Each project will have a mixture of participants from many countries. Volunteers will find themselves working and living with people who are of different nationalities, ages, attitudes, backgrounds and cultures. Sensitivity to other people in the group is very important. Native English speakers should be careful not to talk too fast so everybody can understand them. Volunteers on the projects should be tolerant and open towards new experiences. Another part of the group experience is a commitment to work out decisions and problems together. On many projects there will be one or two people who act as 'Leaders' or 'Co-ordinators', usually selected and trained by SCl branches or partner organisations.

### **Cultural Sensitivity**

Volunteers on an international project should try to be sensitive to the local culture and to the local community that they are working and living in. For some communities it might be their first time to host a group of international volunteers. Volunteers are asked to make a special effort to integrate into the community.



# Practicalities

## Passports and Visas

Make sure you have a valid up to date passport. Bring a photocopy or scan of it with you in case you lose it. Visas and/ or additional documents may be needed for some countries, if so it is your responsibility to obtain them. If necessary, the hosting organisation will send an invitation letter or other documents to you in support of your visa application. As some visas can take a few weeks to process, contact the office in plenty of time for more info.

## Insurance

SCI runs an internal insurance scheme to cover participants during a project. All volunteers on IVPs are automatically covered by this insurance once they have been accepted on a project and paid the fee \*. The insurance covers the volunteer only while on the project itself and not when travelling to and from the project. Volunteers will be provided with information on the SCI insurance scheme before the project start.

We strongly recommend that volunteers taking part in International Volunteer Projects abroad also take out private insurance before travelling. This is because the SCI insurance does not cover volunteers for their travel. The private travel insurance should include full accident and medical cover for all eventualities. Volunteers going to an EU country should take a European Health Insurance Card (go to the EHC website or contact the office for further info), this allows you access to hospital services within the E.U.

Children under 16 years and adults over 70 years are not covered by the SCI Insurance Scheme, so separate insurance cover must be arranged for people in these categories. **IMPORTANT:** The SCI Insurance Scheme has no commercial character, it is designed to be complimentary to other state and private insurance that the volunteer might have.

- Projects in some Eastern European countries and Turkey have limited or no insurance cover. If you intend taking part in a project there, contact us for further insurance details.



# Preparation and Evaluation

## Before you go

Preparation Workshops are held before departure to help prepare volunteers for the projects. As well as giving practical advice and information on travel, money, insurance, what to bring etc. the Preparation Workshops go into more detail about the role and benefit of International Volunteer Projects, guidelines for participation etc. Details can be found on our website and on the application form. Accepted volunteers will be informed of the dates and locations.

**IMPORTANT:** Attendance at the Preparation Day is compulsory for first time volunteers and encouraged for experienced participants

## After the project

We ask volunteers to complete a short evaluation form and to attend an Evaluation Workshop in the autumn, we recommend that all volunteers attend this. The Evaluation Workshop will give you the chance to meet other volunteers and to talk about your project experiences. We use info from the workshops to improve the programme. At the Evaluations you will also find out about other activities and opportunities with us for returned volunteers.

## How to apply

Please go to our website to apply online/download the application form. Please note, you must pay the appropriate fee when you send in your application. Full instructions on applying and payment of fees are on the website.

For costs please see the back of this book.

**For full project descriptions please go to the SCI search engine:**

**[www.workcamps.info](http://www.workcamps.info)**

**or link to it from our website.**

*You can also contact the office for more info.*

## Example projects

### Austria

#### Meeting Place - Paths of Peace

Local and international volunteers will work with the 'Friends of the Dolomites' group restoring and re-opening some of the WW1 wartime paths and trails leading up the Ortler group of mountains. Work will also include excavation and clearance of war time trenches and shelters and reconstructing collapsed rock walls in this open air museum of WW1.

### Belgium

#### Na Fir Bolg

This three-day family festival has a focus on folk music and aims to provide an alternative to commercial festivals. The festival is run by volunteers, in 2009 the festival was attended by 6,000 people. All profits from the festival go to support local environmental conservation. Volunteers will help with erecting and dismantling the festival and also with decoration of the site.

#### Mons

This project is set in two different community houses, the International House offers beds to students from developing countries and provides them with information on Belgium, it aims to raise awareness on north-south issues through events with different NGOs. The

Saint-Paul House provides beds to homeless men and helps them to reintegrate into society. Volunteers will help with general maintenance work (painting, cleaning, gardening).

### Finland

#### Food Not Bombs

Food Not Bombs (FNB) is an international grassroots anti-military movement whose aim is to promote disarmament and social justice. One of the main activities of Helsinki's FNB group is to cook and serve meals on the streets and market places in Helsinki. Food is donated by local shopkeepers. The volunteers will also eat donated food during the camp.

### Germany

#### Ruegen Island Spring

Ruegen is Germany's biggest island located in the Baltic Sea. Volunteers will create pieces of art (drawings, paintings, sculptures etc.) specific to their own country. They will only use natural material. The pieces will be shown in different centres of the city e.g. in schools or kindergartens. While visiting the various centres the volunteers will meet children from the city.

## Germany

### Buchenwald

This project is organised in cooperation with the local youth centre on the territory of the former concentration camp of Buchenwald, one of the biggest concentration camps during the Nazi era where more than 250,000 people were displaced. The volunteers will carry out gardening and do other work at the site. Volunteers will learn about the history of the former concentration camp and its satellite camps, violence and racism.



## Great Britain

### Camphill Botton

Created to offer opportunities to adults with intellectual disabilities, Botton Village has grown to become the largest Camphill community today, home to around 280 people. Volunteers will work alongside community members on jobs around the farm, forest, garden, dairy and bakery. The village is in the beautiful North Yorkshire Moors National Park.

### Gowanbank

Gowanbank Environmental Arts was originally formed to restore historic buildings and landscape. They have an interest in innovative and environmentally conscientious new log buildings. The community also welcomes and trains homeless young adults. Volunteers will be tree planting and restoring a stone wall. There will also be costume making for a children's project promoting healthy eating with the theme of fruit and vegetables.



## Iceland

### The lighthouse at the end of the world!

This lighthouse is located in the West Fjords, the least visited and most remote area of Iceland, it can only be reached by boat or by foot. Fishing is traditionally the main industry in the region but tourism has become more and more important. Volunteers are needed to work on restoration and renovation of the light house and on the surrounding area.

## Ireland

### Mosney

Mosney is a former holiday resort, which now provides housing for almost 700 residents from 50 different countries seeking asylum in Ireland. There are approximately 100 children and young people aged 6-16yrs resident in Mosney. Volunteers are needed to help run activities for some of these children including sports, arts and drama.

## Macedonia

### Strnovac Eco Farm

Located in the middle of a long valley 35 km northeast of Skopje, Kumanovo is one of Macedonia's larger cities. Volunteers are needed to work on a local eco-farm, assisting farmers in the daily agricultural work and looking after the farm animals.

## Northern Ireland

### Glebe House

This cross community residential centre caters for young people, children and adults from catholic and protestant communities. Volunteers are needed to do a major clear and tidy up after the busy summer children's programme, including cleaning, redecoration, painting and gardening. There will be time set aside for discussions on topics relating to Northern Ireland Politics and history. Glebe House is located in a beautiful and isolated area close to Strangford Lough.

## Poland

### Korzecznik

This project is organised by the primary school in Korzecznik. The aim is to provide activities for pupils and local children during the summer. Volunteers will help with organising activities including sport, artistic workshops and arts and crafts. There will also be some painting or renovation inside the school.



## Russia

### Sodruzhestvo Ryazan City

Ryazan is an ancient Russian town about 190 km southeast of Moscow, beautifully located on the Oka River. Volunteers are needed to help organize educational activities for children, including linguistic workshops, games and sports.

## Sweden

### Human Rights at the Midnight Sun

This 'Pacifist Voluntary Project' takes place at the Vallens Kretsloppsskola environmental education centre, 35 km from Luleå, a city very near the Arctic Circle and the North Pole. The aim of the camp is to learn, discuss and exchange perspectives about 'honour violence' and human rights. The work consists of painting, making sculptures, dancing and role-playing games based on discussions, lectures, films and workshops.

## United States

### SPROUT

SPROUT is dedicated to helping individuals with intellectual disabilities to grow through challenging and safe travel experiences. Volunteers will co-lead small groups of adults with disabilities on short vacations. Responsibilities include ensuring safety, providing emotional and physical support, enhancing fun, budgeting and activity planning while on trips. Based in New York City and various destinations.



## Volunteers' stories

### Volunteering in Britain

*In June 2009 I spent two weeks slashing and trashing down in Monkton Wyld Court in Dorset. Monkton Wyld Court is a community near Axminster in Dorset that run a B&B in a nice old vicarage. They grow their own vegetables and run courses on for instance permaculture and other topics. The new management at Monkton felt that they needed to open the community towards the local population, making it more accessible. So they decided to apply for a grant to make a small educational woodland path. For this they enlisted the help of IVS.*

*On the 14th June, we arrived, one girl from Japan and three Spanish girls. We had a small introduction from one of the managers, Caroline Walker, and then got to know each other better. The next day we started working on the woodland path by clearing observation spots around trees and so on. A lot of tough and hardy brambles had grown up around them together with nasty stinging nettles, and for the next two weeks we managed to get our fair share of cuts and bruises. We worked mostly with hand tools like cutters and sickles and successfully cleared space around the observation spots.*

*However, not all the time was spent on the path but also in the vegetable garden and in the kitchen, where tasty vegetarian meals were prepared*



*using a small amount of resources. The Jurassic coast in Dorset indeed had a lot to offer as we did excursions in the surrounding area. We went to the market in Bridport and we played Frisbee on the beach or went for a swim at the coast town Lyme Regis. We also managed to finish last in a Monday pub quiz.*

*After two weeks of hard work and a lot of fun, we had made some good friends at Monkton Wyld Court and we became good friends ourselves. The Spanish girls turned our Japanese volunteer into a Flamenco by teaching her to clap the Flamenco rhythm and sing the songs. Myself I learned to use a scythe and did a good impression of Ekrot's Death in the Seventh Seal. Together we were the Bramble Busters!*

*I had a great time at my first SCI project!*

**Carl-Magnus Forsudd**

## Volunteering in Ukraine

### Fighting Discrimination and Racism in Ukraine

*Is it your first time volunteering? Are you concerned about what you will find at the work camp? Who you will be meeting and if it is going to work out? Well, I had the same worries before going to Kharkov, the second largest city in Ukraine! The project: organising a photo exhibition about discrimination and racism with 6 other volunteers and 2 camp leaders.*

*What an experience! First, I had to learn some basic Russian phrases, so I could say: "ya nye panimayu paruski": I do not understand Russian; "Vih gavaritye paangliski?: Do you speak English?"; "Spasiba": Thank you... Obviously, it was not enough to interact with the locals, but fortunately the camp leaders were there to help us out. The culture is very different, the money is different and the language is different, but after a few days, we could find our way around.*

*The living conditions were very simple. We were accommodated in a students' dormitory, right in the heart of the city. The shower and the toilets were basic and rudimentary. Imagine, a girl was warming up water in a kettle every single morning to have a hot shower... That was !!*

*Our first task, while getting used to the new place, was to take pictures, loads of pictures, for the future exhibition. The latter had to take place 10 days later. Some of the volunteers were very well equipped and had fantastic skills in photography. In total, we gathered about 20 gigabytes of*

*pictures! Everybody finds a way to fit in the project. Those who had other skills, such as event planning or web design were more than delighted to use them. It was great to see every one of us contributing in our own way!*

*Finally we did it! After 10 hard working days under the sun nevertheless, and few hours sleep, we had a great exhibition! D-day was Sunday September 6th. We printed leaflets and posters in Russian, and contacted the local Non Governmental Organisation: Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, to give a talk. It was such a great success!! Lots of visitors turned up on the day, as well as 3 journalists to admire our 32 pictures!*

*We wished to show the visitors that we are all equal, and have all the same rights: The right to live, and be treated decently. "I am Human!" was the leitmotif of the exhibition.*

**by Beatrix Lafosse**



## Volunteering in Belgium

*In August 2008 I went on my first ever project with SCI, it was called Wemel Kamp and took place in Herentals, Belgium. The work was to help at a camp for children who have Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) and slight autism.*

*I was so nervous before I went, I didn't know what to expect. What were the other volunteers going to be like? How would I cope with sleeping in the woods (I am not really a camping girl!!)? Well I had absolutely no need to worry at all as I loved my whole time there so much!*

*There were 5 other volunteers: 2 from Italy, 1 from Ukraine, 1 from Russia and 1 from Germany. I shared a tent with 3 other volunteers. I made a real bond with some of them and am still in touch with them now.*

*The project was located completely in the woods with areas for the kitchen, crafts, materials, washing, toilets... although there were 'proper' toilets and showers a short walk away!*

*Our first 2 ½ days were free, for the volunteers and co-ordinator to spend time together and do a bit of sight-seeing before the camp started. We went to Brussels and also Bruges. We had such a great time and it was good to get to know each other more before the hard work began.*

*We had to decide which group of kids we would work with. I chose the group aged 9 -11 who suffered from ADHD only. There were around 10 kids in each group, 4 groups in all. The theme of the camp was 'pirates' so the first day the kids arrived we*

*dressed up in pirate gear. I was very nervous the first day as although we had been briefed on their backgrounds and had lots of meetings about how the camp worked and how we were to treat/handle the kids...I still didn't really know what to expect. Again, all I can say is that I had nothing to worry about! The kids were absolutely amazing. We spent the next 7 days making things with them e.g. pirate swords, jewellery, drawings and T-shirts; we played games with them, went swimming, went on a boat trip.... Yes it was hard work and tiring but it was so rewarding just seeing the kids laugh, smile and enjoy themselves. The camp has been running for 6 years and some of the kids have been going every year for 4 -6 years, that's how much they love being there. The other volunteers were great too...we all got on really well. The organisers of the camp were also amazing too...everyone really chipped in and got on so well. After the camp had finished (where I cried lots), we stayed for 2 days at the organisers B&B in Antwerp with the other volunteers and co-ordinator. As we all got on so well, the leaders of the camp also joined us and we had 2 fun filled days, sight-seeing, eating and partying.*

*I'm so glad I chose this camp, with it being my first project I was extremely nervous but I had a wonderful experience and will cherish the memories forever. Roll on my next SCI project!!*

**by Mei**

## Volunteering in Portugal

*My name is Ketai and here is a little story about my first summer camp in Portugal: 'Dialogues Between Cultures', Sao Pedro Da Cova, Porto, Portugal, July 2008.*

*On the 16th July, I found myself on an early morning flight on route to Portugal. A bit sleep deprived but happy. I was very excited about my summer camp. I have never been to Portugal, so this was going to be something new for me. As I boarded my flight, I was very certain I was alone but I decided to look upon this experience as an adventure, my adventure. I found a spare seat and sat next to two girls, who seemed to look more sleep deprived than I was and started up a conversation with them. They told me that they were from Poland and also going to a summer camp in Porto! I couldn't believe it, it turned out to be exactly the same camp as I was going to! What a small world indeed! I definitely knew I wasn't alone.*

*We arrived at the project and found out that the beds were already made-up and had been kindly loaned by the army. A few hours later, the other volunteers arrived and after some free time we had dinner from 8:00 - 9:00pm although it seemed to last longer, Portuguese style. I loved it, everyone was so relaxed and for once not in a hurry. I was used to the fast pace of life, and this for me was something I could easily get used to. It was really nice to be able to slow down and not have to worry about time. Mr Duarte, the mayor of the village, joined us for dinner most days and he*

*was a happy and funny man. He even introduced us to the music of Fado.*

*In the next few days we had a schedule to follow, it included getting to know the village and the history of Sao Pedro Da Cova, discussions about our own cultures, traditions and history, cultural evenings, visiting the Serralves gardens, churches and museums, lunch at the beach and most importantly playing traditional games from each country with the children of the Vai Avante Association.*

*We visited a few youth centres and met their representatives. Of course we spent time with the kids, playing games, baking cakes, painting and dancing - which is my favourite hobby and passion. We also spent some time visiting the city centre of Oporto and the city of Gondomar.*

*We really had a good time and I made friends from Serbia, Estonia, Portugal, Netherlands, Spain, Poland, Russia, Turkey and France. We all had different cultures and languages and this taught all of us to be more open and to understand the world around us.*

*I loved Porto as a city, its people and their culture, this has made me realise everything is possible if you give it a chance and if you believe in yourself. I hope to return to Portugal soon and even learn Portuguese.*

**by Ketai**



# International Volunteer Projects North South Programme

## Introduction

North South is the term used to describe the relations between the countries of the Northern World (developed) with the countries of the Southern world (developing). The SCI North South programme covers International Volunteer Projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America; the Middle East and North Africa.

# International Volunteer Projects

## North South Programme

### Africa, Asia, Latin America Programme

The Africa, Asia, Latin America Programme is a Development Education programme set within the Millennium Development Goals (see boxes below) which enables people to gain an insight and understanding of development and issues facing people and countries of the developing world by participating in short term International Volunteer Projects of practical benefit to local communities. The Programme is made up of four elements; Preparation, Projects, Evaluation, Using your experience.

We encourage volunteers to join in 2 or 3 short term projects during their stay in a developing country, as well as visiting other development and community projects. However, it is also possible to join an individual project.

### Development Education

Is an active learning process, founded on values of solidarity, equality, inclusion and co-operation. It enables people to move from basic awareness of international development priorities and sustainable human development, through understanding of causes and effects of global issues, to personal involvement and informed action.

Development education fosters the full participation of all citizens in world-wide poverty eradication, and the fight against exclusion. It seeks to influence more just and sustainable economic, social, environmental, human rights based national and international policies.

### Millennium Development Goals

- GOAL 1** Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.
- GOAL 2** Achieve universal primary educations.
- GOAL 3** Promote gender equality and empower women.
- GOAL 4** Reduce child mortality.
- GOAL 5** Improve maternal health.
- GOAL 6** Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
- GOAL 7** Ensure environmental sustainability.
- GOAL 8** Develop a global partnership for development.

# Africa Projects

*Below are some examples of projects taking place this year. Check on line for a full list of projects or contact the office for further details.*

- Botswana,
- Burkina Faso
- Ghana
- Ivory Coast
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Mozambique
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

## Botswana Permaculture Trust

Permaculture Trust is a rural development NGO that provides assistance in the area of ecological land-use management. It strongly encourages and supports tradition and culture values that relate to sustainable environmental use. Targeted groups include: Remote area dwellers; rural small communal dwellers; Other NGOs. Volunteers will help with making a demonstration garden; making garden plots and other landscaping work.

## Ghana Bamyili

Volunteers will be joined by the local community to construct a training centre for local young people in this rural town. The volunteers will help with building walls, concreting and moulding of blocks etc. supported and trained by a local builder.

## Kenya Wandech Primary School, Western Province

Wandech Primary School, Western Province – volunteers will help with brick making and classroom construction at this rural school. There will be visits to local community projects and a study on HIV AIDS.

## Nigeria Imasayi Public Health Clinic

The volunteers will lay the foundations and put up blocks for the walls of a dispensary hall with a reception room, nursing bay, doctors office and emergency care unit. The dispensary room will be for the use of the entire community and its environ. The old health centre will also be renovated with volunteers assisting the local community to repair the dilapidated structure.

## Senegal Good French needed Les Ententes

The Ententes is a non-governmental association created by farmers. It wants to be an economic alternative for its members. Its aims are education work on inequality in villages between rich and poor and stopping the migration to big cities. The project will involve volunteers living in small rural villages. Volunteers will be placed in small groups (2/3) in different villages and will be hosted in a family. They will participate in the daily tasks of the village.

## Tanzania Kilimanjaro Region

Volunteers will assist with planting trees

along the conservation areas of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Volunteers will also work with primary schools in the area to raise awareness of conservation which will include the establishment of tree nurseries.

## Togo

*Good French needed*

### Hanyigba 1

Education in Togo faces a lot of problems because of the social and political crisis in the country. Astovot has set up a series of projects working with students, so that they can have a good beginning in primary and secondary schools. This support is important for the students of rural areas who have less advantage compared to students in towns. Volunteers will work in the morning and do social and educational activities with the children in the afternoons. At the end of the project there is a celebration including drawing, games, talk, tales and songs dance and music.

## Zambia

### Kyalalankuba Community School

Kyalalankuba Community School is a community owned school that was constructed through work camps. Before 2007 this community had no school and the children had to walk long distances and literally stopped school during the rainy season. The volunteers will construct a third classroom block for the school. This includes putting up a floor and raising the walls. The second camp will involve maintaining foot paths and trails at the national monument.

## Asia Projects

- Bangladesh
- India
- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Nepal
- Mongolia
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- Vietnam

## Indonesia

### Mangkang, Semarang Central Java

Preserving the natural diversity and sea shore will be the main focus of the project. The shore is eroded by the depletion of the mangrove for industry and strong ocean waves. These projects organised by IWC in answering the needs of preserving the coastal side of North Java Sea in Mangkang. Many kinds of fish and shrimps are also disappearing, as the condition of the mangrove forest worsens. Fishermen now need to go further out into the ocean to fish and it means much longer working hours. Volunteers will help with planting mangrove, and other trees for the beach, environmental education to local people and children and educational visits to schools.

## Mongolia

### Orphanage's farm- Buhug River 20 volunteers

The Childcare Centre of Mongolia (CCM) is the only fully government-funded orphanage in Mongolia. The pre-school children range between 3-18 years. There are currently a total of 300 children comprising approximately 150 younger ones and 150 older one. In addition 35 teachers and 50 staff run the Centre. The children live in a very deprived environment. Facilities and living space are limited. The main concern is food and education facilities. Some small plots of land are available for the Centre to cultivate vegetables to feed the children. They produce vegetables such as carrots, radish, onions, etc. just enough for their meals all year. The main work of the volunteers is to help the Orphanage's vegetable farm- weeding wild plants, watering the farm and trees etc. In addition volunteers will organise sports and cultural activities with the children including sport, games, art work.

## Sri Lanka

### International Summer Work Camp Programme 15 volunteers

Volunteers will join in 4 mini projects during their 6 week stay. The programme will also include orientation and evaluation. Projects will be held at the Blue Rose School in Kandy –a school for special children; a manual project with the local community in Anuradapura; an environmental project at a village pre school and a tree planting project in the tea plantation area of Koyagala.

## Thailand

### Baan Kuan Pring

Baan Kuan Pring is a small village in Nakhon Sritammarat province on the border to the provinces Pattalung and Trang. About 200 people live in Baan Kuan Pring and the main occupation is working on local rubber farms. Volunteers will work together with a group of enthusiastic villagers who are setting up a learning centre for biological/ ecological agriculture near a national park in a rainforest surrounding. Awareness of environmental issues and self-sufficiency has not spread much among villagers in rural areas wherefore their aim is to educate people about those topics. As well university students come regularly to learn about this way of farming. Volunteers will build a clay house with a small experienced group from the North of Thailand. Other small environmental and agricultural activities can be done as well as getting to know Thai culture.



## Vietnam

### Vietnam Friendship Village

Vietnam Friendship Village is a treatment/care centre located in the western outskirts of Hanoi Capital, which was opened in 1993 to treat children and veterans who suffer from the effects of Agent Orange (a chemical used by the American army during Vietnam-US War). The Organic Gardening Project was launched in 2004 with the goal of creating islands of a harmonious approach to agriculture within areas of environmental and human devastation - increasing awareness of the consequences of war and, at the same time, demonstrating positive strategies for healing and living. Volunteers will help with clearing the site, preparing soil, weeding, planting vegetables and fruit trees, cleaning a fish pond and redecorating the flowers in the garden. Additional activities may include planting trees, moving bricks for construction, collecting garbage and playing with the children or exchanging with local volunteers or farmers.



## Latin America projects

- Argentina
- Brazil
- Ecuador
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Peru

### Brazil

#### Projeto Maria de Barro

Projeto Maria de Barro is a NGO which promotes social and environmental local development projects since September 1999. The main project aims to recover extremely eroded soils, developing and applying new environmental technologies. They also create jobs in a poor community and promote environmental conscience. It is located in a very small and not developed town called Nazareno. The volunteers will be involved in the production of forest seedlings, collecting forest seeds and planting seedlings.

STUDY PART: Short lectures on the activities held by the "Projeto Maria de Barro" and other related issues will be held. During the 2 weekends, SVI Brasil team will offer to the volunteers a workshop on "Global Communities Formation".

### Mexico

#### San Luis Potosí

San Luis Potosí -Volunteers will work with a local cooperative, which produces organic vanilla plants. They will help to build storage sheds, help with the harvesting etc.

# International Volunteer Projects North South Programme

## Middle East Programme

- Egypt
- Israel
- Jordan
- Palestinian Territories
- Syria

*Peace in the Middle East remains one of the major challenges to be solved for the international community today. After years of Intifada, peace agreements and ongoing occupation, young people are the part of the population most affected by the stalemate. International voluntary service is a way to express solidarity and transmit hope, energy and creativity for people to construct their citizenship under difficult circumstances through day-by-day co-operation among people of different backgrounds. SCI cooperates with partner organisations in the region.*

## Palestinian Territories

**The reality of the Palestinian Refugee, Askar Refugee Camp, West Bank**

SCI's Palestinian partner organisation, IPYL will host 30 international volunteers in the Northern West Bank City of Nablus, where they will volunteer at a local Refugee Camp. The volunteers will mainly work with children and people with disabilities through the following tasks; farming, painting, art, drama. Afternoons will give the volunteers the opportunity to experience Palestinian culture through tours to local villages and refugee camps, lectures and interaction with local people. They will also be able to visit villages close to the separation wall, women's centers and NGO's working with Palestinian people affected by the conflict. The group will also get the chance to watch movies in the evenings which will explain the realities of the conflict.



# North Africa

- Algeria
- Morocco
- Tunisia

## Morocco

### Safi

Safi is a town on the Atlantic Ocean (pop. 400,000). Volunteers will help with the painting and decorating of a local community centre which hosts older people in social difficulties.

## Tunisia

### Family workcamp, SFAX 3 families

Our partner, UTAIM (Union Tunisienne d'Aide aux Insuffisants Mentaux) is working to promote improvement of the life quality of children with special needs. This project is reserved for families only (parents with their children – minimum 5 years old).

Volunteers will help with activities with the children of the Centre -outings, games.

The aim is to give the children an enjoyable holiday.



# Volunteer stories

## Volunteering in Nigeria

*I just wanted to write a short story about my latest project. I have just returned from my second SCI project and this time I went to Nigeria for 4 and half weeks to work at Arrows of God Orphanage. I cannot explain how nervous I was before I left the UK, not knowing what kind of place I'd be living in, the people, how safe I was going to be etc. etc. but all that aside I was very excited and just wanted to get there.*

*Well I arrived at Lagos airport and as soon as I stepped off the plane...wow, the heat just hit me, I felt like I was inside an oven! It took me over 2 hours to get my luggage; the Nigerians certainly don't travel light!! Amongst the mass crowd of people outside the airport, I eventually located Kola (member of VWAN). I stayed with Kola for a few days where also 2 other volunteers were staying, Marietta from Germany and Missey from USA. We spent those days getting to know each other, getting used to local life, the people, the food, the very, very hot weather! We then had a 3 day training seminar which was held in Iperu. There were other volunteers there from other parts of Africa too. I met some great people there and we had so much fun getting to know everyone.*

*After leaving the seminar I was then departing from my much loved new friends, Marietta and Missey and heading to Victoria Island to Arrows of God orphanage. I went there with 2 other volunteers, Krystal from USA and Flo from*

*Switzerland and spent the remainder of my time there (3 and half weeks).*

*The orphanage is very well established compared to some of the other orphanages and other projects that Missey and Marietta had been to. The kids were amazing there, so well behaved and although have very little, appreciated everything. I spent my time there playing with the children and teaching at the nursery/primary school which was located within the orphanage.*

*On the whole I loved it at the orphanage and loved Nigeria, although at times found it hard to accept their way of discipline but realise that it is their culture and the children are used to the way of life over there. Generally Nigerians are very welcoming and I did not feel at danger while as I was there, although you still have to be very aware of the corruption that goes on and not to be too naive.*

*I've learnt a lot being out there and I definitely want to continue with more voluntary projects. I am planning to go back to Nigeria at Christmas for 2 weeks to spend time with the kids and to visit another orphanage along with seeing the friends I've made.*

### **Mei volunteer to Nigeria**

## Volunteering in Mongolia

*I have learned from my experience that wherever you go people, communities struggle with certain problems. But there are also people willing to take this struggle on behalf of the community. Individually we sow the seed on which others will follow.*

**Joanna volunteer to Mongolia**

## Volunteering in Malaysia

*I learned some interesting insights into the Muslim religion as the first week of the projects was with a Muslim family. Working and visiting a country with very different cultural backgrounds and beliefs you learn common ground rules out of respect to the local people.*

**Bryony volunteer to Malaysia**

## Volunteering in Kenya

*I learned so much from the projects in Kenya. No matter how much the Kenyans have to deal with, they battle on for the betterment of their children. They are amazingly happy and welcoming people. I also learnt that I love Africa!*

**Luke volunteer to Kenya**

## Volunteering in Thailand

*I was immersed in the local community from the start of the project. We lived in the middle of the community and were very much part of it. We ate with the villagers every day and interacted with the locals in the community area also on a daily basis. (Thus helping to improve our knowledge of Thai language as most of the local people did not speak any English) We also had organised a language class at our living accommodation for each evening for any of the local people who wanted to come. This was an informal class after dinner and went on for about two hours. Anyone who wanted to come was welcome.*

**Nicholas volunteer to Thailand**

## Volunteering in Tanzania

*Tanzania I learnt how so much can be achieved when people and spirits are willing. There was a great community spirit and it showed how much can be done with modern machinery! I will be raising awareness about Tanzania in my classroom and I hope to link up my school with the school in Tanzania.*

**Maria volunteer to Tanzania**

## Volunteering in Thailand

*Klong Dan Fishing Village - the two week long volunteering projects offered by SCI are ideal for those of us who want to fit volunteering around work and study. There is another benefit in that one does not only interact with the host community but there will be many different nationalities amongst your fellow volunteers.*

*I had already taken part in projects in Britain and mainland Europe so, when I heard about the tsunami, I chose a project in a Muslim fishing village in the south of Thailand where there was still much work to be done 6 months later. This latest project was in a Buddhist village in the north east.*

*All projects have much in common yet each one is different.*

*Never before had I:*

- been up at 6 a.m. EVERY morning
- knelt in the road at dawn to give rice to the monks
- eaten a cricket! though I rejected the beetles
- ridden for 2 hours in the back of a pickup truck
- done a 12 hour overnight train journey alone
- had an hour's massage while waiting for a train
- been offered so many lifts on a moped
- seen a baby water buffalo the morning it was born
- eaten a meal cross legged on the temple floor
- spent a day scything rice
- shovelled so much earth
- eaten so many bananas and drunk so much coconut milk
- slept so well, laughed so much, had such a variety of tasks
- seen such rivers, waterfalls and orchids.

*Other aspects were familiar. The villagers were welcoming and hospitable, the work hard but enjoyable and friendships made around the world. Now I am looking at the website and dreaming about this year's opportunity.*

**Hannah volunteer to Thailand**

## Volunteering in Palestine

*Each day we've been helping the local Palestinian villages by partaking in several building, farming and maintenance activities. We've helped to clean up playgrounds, parks and cemeteries. We've spruced up the streets of Bethlehem for the Christmas build-up and built walls high up in the hills to prevent roads from washing away. We've also helped out at a Women's Centre and helped local farmers to farm their land. If Palestinian farmers leave their land idle for a period of three years the Israelis will waltz in and occupy it. With so many volunteers we get quite a lot of work done. The work we are doing is of great benefit to the local village people and town residents. The people are very welcoming and courteous. Our presence here in Bethlehem has turned a lot of heads and attracted a lot of attention both in the local community and in the media. With the increased media presence in Bethlehem in the run up to Christmas, various networks from Lebanon, France and Italy have been finding out more about the work we are doing here.*

**Michael volunteer to Palestine**



# International Volunteer Projects

## North South Programme

### Practical Information

**Who can take part:** The programme is open to volunteers over 20 years of age with previous volunteering experience.

**Conditions:** Conditions on the projects can be basic e.g. no electricity; no running water depending on the location etc.

**Being part of an international group:** The volunteer group will be made up of international volunteers, volunteers from schools and colleges in the country and local volunteers from the village or town. Often villagers will join the project for 1-2 days and students from the village school will be there every day!

**Leisure and free time:** There is usually a study theme to each project and volunteers should prepare themselves to contribute to the discussions. There is a lot of interaction with the local community where the project is based including teaching in schools, family visits, visits to local places of historic or scenic interest etc. Bring a musical instrument, deck of cards, chess set etc.

**Costs:** Food and accommodation are provided while on the individual projects. Volunteers have to cover travel to the country and internal travel to/from the projects. Volunteers have to take out a comprehensive insurance policy and have to cover visa fees (if any). Volunteers have to pay a programme fee to us (see the website for details) and the host organisation on arrival. More details at the Preparation Workshops/ briefings by staff and experienced volunteers.

**Practical:** Volunteers travel to the city/town where the host organisation is based (usually the capital city). After orientation, they will travel together with other international and local volunteers to the project site.

**Volunteers working with children, young people and vulnerable adults:** Volunteers wishing to work on projects with or around children, young people or vulnerable adults will need to provide two references and a self-signed declaration form confirming the absence of a criminal record. Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Training will be provided for volunteers working on these projects. Some projects require police checks, where applicable this is stated in the project description. More details from the office. How to apply: You can download the application form from our website or contact the office.

**Preparation:** We organise a comprehensive preparation, orientation and briefing programme for participants. Volunteers intending to take part in the North South programme must join in our Preparation/Briefing Programme. Contact the office or see our website for further details.

# Long Term Volunteering



# Long Term Volunteering

Our Long Term Volunteering Programme enables people to volunteer from 2 to 12 months on a variety of voluntary placements that are of benefit to local communities and voluntary organisations.

**There are a wide variety of projects each year, for example:**

- Working in a centre for refugees in Brussels
- Helping with activities at a centre for young deaf people near Warsaw
- Working in a centre for adults with intellectual disability in Vermont
- Work with a youth training project in Andalucia
- Work with a human rights organisation in Moldova

## Why Long Term Volunteering?

**Volunteers contribute to the projects in a variety of ways:**

- Through their skills and practical help
- Through the sharing of knowledge and cultural exchange
- Through their support and solidarity

**A volunteer can benefit enormously from their time as a long term volunteer, through:**

- Experience of a new situation, culture, language, people etc.
- Learning new skills (practical, social, language)
- Exposure to new ideas and approaches to voluntary and community work
- Satisfaction in seeing your contribution being useful

## SCI Long Term Volunteering

Every 2/3 months on our website we publish a vacancy list of projects from SCI branches and partner organisations requiring long-term volunteers. Most of them are in Europe and North America but also take place in other continents.

### Terms and conditions

Although no two projects are the same, the volunteer can expect the following:

- A contract with a detailed job description, working hours, free time etc.
- Useful work and special training where necessary
- Food, accommodation and insurance cover to be provided
- Some projects to offer pocket money
- To cover your own travel costs to/from the project
- Preparation and evaluation sessions pre-departure and on return
- We ask volunteers to become a member and to pay a project fee (please contact us for more details).

**To apply:** Read the latest vacancy list on our website or ask the office to send you a copy. Download the Long Term Volunteering Application Form and return it to our office.

## European Voluntary Service

EVS is an EU funded programme for people aged 18-30 years. Information on the programme can be viewed on the European Commission Youth website (link through our website).

There is a database on this site listing all the approved EVS projects. SCI is a recognised sending organisation under the EVS scheme. There are quarterly deadlines for funding applications and the process usually takes several months.

### Terms and Conditions

- Travel costs, food, accommodation, pocket money and insurance provided by the EU
- Volunteers will be provided with a contract and a detailed job description including working hours, free time etc.
- The work will be useful and special training will be provided where necessary
- Pre-departure preparation provided by the sending organisation – see below
- On-arrival training is provided by the national agency for the programme in the host country and volunteers also take part in an evaluation of the placement
- Each volunteer is provided with a mentor for the duration of the EVS placement
- EVS volunteers are entitled to a Youthpass certificate which describes the learning experiences acquired during the project
- We ask volunteers to become a member of SCI (see website for details).

### Preparation

Our staff will meet with each volunteer, and together we will organise an appropriate preparation and orientation programme for all aspects of the volunteer project. This includes:

- meeting with former long-term volunteers
- visits to similar projects in their locality
- learning the local language of the project
- practical issues - insurance, finances, visas, health etc

**To apply:** Contact the office for more details.

## Long Term Volunteering in Russia

*It would be hard to push the borders of EVS much further than Russia's Perm region, which lies over one thousand kilometres east of Moscow, in the western foothills of the Ural mountains, the traditional geographical frontier between Europe and Asia. This seemingly remote region is home to almost 3 million inhabitants. One third of these live in the city of Perm itself, a sprawling town which was founded nearly 300 years ago, but much of whose history remains secret.*

*In Soviet times, Perm, with its harsh climate and isolated location, was often designated as a place of political exile, and conservative estimates suggest that at the peak of Soviet repression (1929-1953), over half a million people here were or became victims of political persecution. During the second world war, much of Russia's heavy industry, including military industry, was relocated to the region, and as a result Perm was a closed city throughout the Soviet period. Even now, almost twenty years since the Soviet Union was dissolved, many people in the town and region have never left the Russian Federation, and are surprised to meet people from foreign countries here, and to find out that there has been a steady stream of long- and short-term volunteers arriving in Perm since the mid-90s.*

*Many of these volunteer experiences have been made possible by the youth branch of Memorial, an international human rights organisation founded in Perm in the 1980s with the aim of rehabilitating the victims of political repression. By now, Memorial has become a touchstone for voluntary organisations in the city, with many NGOs being founded and staffed by former Memorial volunteers and staff. These tireless activists have earned Perm the title of Russian*

*Capital of Civil Society. It was through Youth Memorial, which, among its many activities, coordinates international voluntary exchanges, that my EVS placement in the local children's charity Love's Bridge was organised.*

*Founded by a group of international volunteers in the late 1990s, the initial goal of Love's Bridge was to provide shelter and sustenance for the city's hundreds of street children, who were living in basements and sewers, begging at the markets, sniffing glue, abusing other drugs and alcohol, and also living in high risk of contracting HIV. Over the years, the number of homeless children has been vastly diminished and Love's Bridge now runs two daytime drop-in centres for local youth, who can attend courses in independent living and social skills, receive career guidance and a confidence boost, as well as develop their interests and talents such as art, theatre, languages, journalism, technology and sport. Many of these children and teenagers come from broken homes, are living on the poverty line, and are considered to be 'at risk' – of dropping out of school, of running away from home, of becoming dependent on drugs or alcohol, of being exposed to HIV/AIDS, of being physically or sexually abused, of ending up in the city's juvenile detention centre or simply on the streets. Many of the young men and women who drop into the centre from time to time for a cup of tea and a chat are former street children, some of whom lived for several years in the Love's Bridge shelter, and who are now trying to keep their lives on track.*

*Volunteering at Love's Bridge is a full-time commitment – EVS volunteers can expect to work up to five days a week*

alongside professional Russian social-workers and psychologists, who are very welcoming of fresh energy, new ideas, candid opinions, and just moral support in this exhausting but satisfying work. It's not just the staff who appreciate your presence – despite their carefree attitude, the kids who come most frequently to the centres (some are there every single day) grow very attached to the foreign volunteers, who are valuable role models and friends as well as figures of authority, whether or not they speak the same language. Long-term volunteers are encouraged to develop their own projects with the kids and receive plenty of support from the staff in planning these projects and realising their aims.

Staff and volunteers at Love's Bridge and Memorial form a ready social network for incoming volunteers, and there's plenty to do in Perm, from seeing the ballet in one of the city's historic theatres to spending an afternoon cross-country skiing. Although the city seems relatively undeveloped at first glance, Perm has any number of theatres and cinemas, as well as some interesting museums and art galleries, plus skating rinks and ski centres in winter and the opportunity for rafting and hiking trips in summer, not to mention summer camps at Perm-36 – Russia's only Gulag museum, situated at a former prison camp outside the city. However, in the winter months, when the temperature can – and



frequently does! – drop well below minus twenty degrees, it can often be more tempting just to sit in a friend's kitchen, drinking tea and discussing Russian history, politics and culture, as well as lighter matters.

Volunteers arriving in Perm should expect to face culture and climate shock, especially if it's your first time in Russia! However, doing your EVS here affords you a lot of space in which to further your knowledge and develop your skills and experiences – of Russian culture and of working in the NGO sector, and although the placement is best suited to highly-motivated and independent individuals, you are supported every step of the way.

For more information on volunteering with Youth Memorial and/or Love's Bridge see <http://volonter59.ru/> & <http://www.lovesbridge.org/>

**Sinead Walsh, EVS volunteer**

## Long Term Volunteering in Denmark

I'm working in the Jammerbugt Ungdomsskole, a municipal youth service in Brovst, NW Denmark. My work revolves around 3 main areas: Projektlassen (the Project class); schools; and developmental youth work.

The project class is an informal educational programme for young people, aged between 14 and 16 years, for whom the mainstream educational system did not work. I work with this programme for 2 1/2 days per week and teach English in an

informal manner to young people on a one to one basis.

The second area of my work is in schools and I am developing the 'fun & games programme' which is a catalogue of a wide range of English language games, activities, stories and rhymes which I will deliver in schools.

The third area of my work is developmental youth work and includes work around the Youth in Action programme, specifically European youth

exchanges, training for youth workers, and partnership building activities.

Overall, I'm thoroughly enjoying my work and life in Denmark, my organisation and fellow EVSs have been very warm and welcoming. Obviously there is a period of transition when you go to a new country and try to learn a new language and while my Danish is very basic, I'm enjoying the challenge and am glad that I took the opportunity to do this EVS.

**Amanda Slevin, EVS volunteer**

## Long Term Volunteering in Sri Lanka

Four and a half years had elapsed since my last visit to Kalmunai Sri Lanka, this time under much less stressful circumstances than the aftermath of the now historical Tsunami of 2004. The children are now young adults and towering condominiums have sprung up from the debris of the huts and houses of the devastated village. Myself and Hanai, an SCI Japan volunteer I had worked with in 2005, were met with gasps of astonishment as we toured the area. The village people found it hard to comprehend that we had returned.

We were treated as honoured guests with dinner and wedding photos, gossip, kisses, hugs and handshakes, they laughed and cried as they related their stories to us.

I also spent time with Mark from Austria and local volunteers at the tea plantations in the central parts of the hill country, high above the cloud forming tropical rainforests where the crickets and frogs sing in a chorus through the night.

Our team presented a variety of projects at the Tamil schools that are

attached to the plantations, mine was to teach basic resuscitation to fifty 7-15yr olds.

Other issues included sexual equality, and although the issue is nationally promoted in Sri Lanka, in reality women are poorly represented in relation to the balance of the population (51% of the population - 4% representation in parliament.). We also renovated some parts of the school and improved the boys' toilet facilities which didn't have the capacity to cope with the numbers.

Unfortunately, because of recent conflict we were unable to move north to the refugee camps, where almost 300,000 refugees were being held. I did meet with a Minister of Parliament to state my case but was told, 'no, all foreign N.G.O. workers and journalists are barred from entering the camps'. Even so, I achieved much more than I anticipated but in a less direct way

**Peter Pollard, LTV**

## Long Term Volunteering in Belgium

*For me, in my final year at college, it was a spur of the moment decision to follow a friend to a talk on volunteering opportunities. I had a vague idea of wanting to travel for a few months and doing something worthwhile that would help me decide what I wanted to do as a career.*

*Once I heard about EVS, a whole other host of possibilities opened up straight away. I never realised I could have the chance to travel, live and volunteer in another European country all the while funded by this scheme of the European Commission.*

*Within a matter of months, I had applied and was accepted to be a member of the Campaign and Communications team for one year at the International Secretariat of the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign in Ypres, Belgium. This is an international campaign for universal nuclear disarmament by the year 2020, working through a network of nearly 3,000 mayors all over the world.*

*The work I was doing with Mayors for Peace was a hugely important part of the experience for me. As we were such a small team, I was given great responsibility and space to learn and develop. A lot of my work was in preparing reports,*

*campaign materials, website content and correspondence but I also personally launched the first 2020 Vision Campaign drive in the Republic of Ireland. With Mayors for Peace, I went to numerous events and conferences at the European Parliament in Brussels as well as to the UN Headquarters in New York. I was given amazing opportunities that I know will stand to me in the future.*

*Other parts of my EVS experience were just as important. I was working with an international team. Thanks to that, I managed to learn French without ever having intended to and travelled many times to France, staying with friends and seeing a different side to the country than I ever had before. I made close friends that are scattered across Spain, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands and France that I'll always have. As well as that, living with Belgian people in a home-stay and travelling to friends I met through work and the EVS network, I feel I really got a taste for Belgian culture and people. It was a place I knew nearly nothing about before my EVS, but now it's a place I'm doing everything in my power to get back to!*

**Jennie Corbett, EVS volunteer**





## Teenage Programme

## **Vision:**

To help young people overcome social, economic, educational, physical, cultural or personal barriers to participation in volunteering projects, and therefore allow them to grow, prosper, learn and develop, and to connect to their local, national and European communities.

## **Mission:**

The Teenage Programme will develop and promote its programme and in doing so empower and support ever-greater numbers of young people to develop personally, and to take action of benefit to themselves and others through the ongoing delivery of volunteering and peace education projects.

The VSI Teenage Programme realises that voluntary work, combined with non-formal peace education, can be an important means for personal and community development. The Programme realises that often the possibility of doing voluntary work is limited to those who have had more opportunities in society or obtained formal educational qualifications. We believe that volunteering should be, and benefits from being, open to everyone regardless of their backgrounds or current circumstances.

The Teenage Programme has provided hundreds of young Irish people with the opportunity to engage with other young people from a range of cultural backgrounds in short term voluntary work experiences, both in Ireland and abroad. These short term experiences often lead to a greater community awareness and involvement on the part of the young person. Often and more importantly the unique experience of living and working in a peer environment allows the participant to develop a sense of responsibility, confidence and other social and personal skills. The Programme also encourages, prepares and supports its participants to develop their own projects, and take part in longer term volunteering projects abroad. The Teenage Programme endeavors to introduce young people to many topics including those of peace and conflict, sustainable living and community, in a way that allows them to take action and develop an understanding of the issues in their personal lives.

The Teenage Programme for 2010 will involve a variety of volunteer projects, peer education projects, monthly "Culture Circle" meetings, weekend trips and the possibility of a 2-week exchange with international participants.

The VSI Teenage Programme is open to young people between 16-25. For more information please contact: Grace Walsh, VSI Teenage Programme Co-ordinator in the VSI office: [teenage@vsi.ie](mailto:teenage@vsi.ie).

The programme is currently looking for volunteers with interest and experience in youth work and volunteering to join the Teenage Programme Working Group. Those with skills in fundraising, child protection, publicity and project management are particularly welcome. The Working Group meets once a month and supports the work of the Teenage Programme Coordinator.

Throughout the year the participants of the Teenage Programme will have the opportunity to take part in local volunteer days, residential weekend volunteering trips around Ireland, a week-long intensive peer education programme, and European Youth Exchanges in Ireland, Spain, Belgium and Greece. There is also the opportunity for young people who are ready for a more independent experience to take part in a Sheltered Placement or Short-term EVS programme, which allows an individual placement on an SCI workcamp, with some additional financial and personal support.

All these projects involve a combination of volunteerism, and non-formal education on themes connected to the environment, peace issues or other topics in keeping with the ethos of SCI, while also allowing the young people the opportunity to live, learn and work together for a period of time, with other young people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds.

*The following Youth Exchanges are scheduled to take place in 2010:*

### **Melifera, Spain** August, 2010

This project take place in August on the Canarian Island of Tenerife and will focus on the environment, as the island has suffered a lot environmentally as a result of tourism and housing. The young people will learn about the care of Turtles (which are native to the island) clean the beaches and take part in raising youth awareness of the issues, as well as developing intercultural understanding and their own interpersonal skills.

### **Ikaria, Greece** Dates TBC, 2010

The Greek branch of SCI will host this Youth Exchange on the small island of Ikaria which is a mountainous island, with one of the world's five zones, where the people regularly live into their 90s. The project will have an environmental theme, and will involve workshops on the impact of tourism in the area, and practical environmental projects in the area, as well as a chance for intercultural learning.

### **Images of Peace, Wicklow** 16th – 26th July, 2010

Groups from the UK, Ireland, Spain and Italy will take part in this project which will focus on the UN Convention on the rights of the Child, and in particular, the right of every child to be protected from conflict. The project will take place over ten days in North Wicklow and will involve a series of workshops on the theme of Human Rights, conflict and intercultural learning. The young people involved in the project will help promote the rights of children and young people in the local community through a mural painting project, and an exhibition in a community centre.



## Fata Morcircus, Belgium

21st till 31st of August, 2010

For this project the groups will be organizing a circus for children in the town of De Pinte, near Gent. They will take part on workshops about working with children, wooden construction, circus skills and more. Fata Morcircus is called after Fata Morgana, a television game in which there was a challenge to earn as much stars as possible, to be a 'five star' village. The group will take on challenges throughout the project to "earn their stars" and learn about cooperation, team-building, conflict-resolution and decision making.

## The Aisling Project, Inis Mór, Galway

17th – 27th August, 2010

Young people from Ireland, Slovenia, France and Spain will spend 10 days on the island of Inis Mór, learning about sustainability, through non formal learning workshops and practical projects on a permaculture project where they will stay. The young people will explore global warming, our relationship with our environment, and practical ways to live more sustainably as well as having the chance to explore the Celtic history of the island of Inis Mór, and take part in intercultural activities with young people from the local community.

## Short-term EVS Positions

Young people who may need financial or personal support to take part in independent volunteering positions can also apply for Short-term EVS projects through the Teenage Programme, and there will be a number of possibilities for this in 2010. Please contact Grace in the VSI office for more details. Funding and reinforced mentorship will be provided for suitable young people.



## Young People's Stories

*"I think my experience with VSI was very good. I took part in a youth exchange in Wicklow in 2009, on sustainable living. I got to meet other people, learned from them, and also they learned from me. We played games together, had some fun, but we also helped the local community by planting flowers, cleaning the environment, helping on the farm etc. Also we did some workshops based on different topics. The different countries came together to learn about each other's culture, language, and food. The experience also taught me how to live in groups."*

**Gloria, Dublin, aged 17**

*"VSI is a great organisation for helping people and learning about different cultures. I personally wasn't sure what to expect when I first went volunteering in Spain but I soon found myself surrounded by a lot of fun and friendly people from all over the world. From Russia to Italy it was very multicultural group and we all got on great. We had the task of helping Spanish archaeologists carefully remove dirt and rubble from an old Spanish civil war bunker which was great 'cause I love history. I was there for 10 days and would have stayed for more if I could have. I would recommend the VSI to anybody. I learnt a lot about Spanish history and their culture, and made friends from all over the world."*

**David, Dublin, aged 21**





## Quotes from young people

"I learned how to express myself more and help people around me whenever they are lost."

"I took away with me a feeling of belonging, new friendships and a great sense of myself."

"It was a good experience for me I learned so many things about language, peace and how to talk with people from different cultures and distant countries."

"I learned to work and live with people that are different of me because of culture or ideas but also that we have things in common."

"I'm learning the important thing that is dialogue with persons when you work with them, even if we don't have the same ideas in the start because the results are incredible!"

"The workshops helped with my learning and how to react with people and be part of a community and that I have to improve with my confidence and how to make good communication with people."

"I bring with me to my home a very good idea about the really important values. I return more mature, like a piece of society. I will try to remember that my actions, all that I transmit to others can have repercussions on the others. I bring too some new friendships and wonderful experiences."

"I learned a lot of things. It helped me to improve my skills, have confidence and how to make friends."

"I learned not to be scared of new people anymore."

# Dublin Local Group

The Dublin Local Group (DLG) of VSI is a volunteer group which undertakes to improve the living conditions of the elderly, disabled and marginalised in the Dublin local community. The work we undertake is normally referred to us by Vincent de Paul, Friends of the Elderly, Care Local and the Social Work Departments of Dublin City Council, the Health Service Executive and all hospitals in the Dublin City Area.

It is only the start of the year and we have plenty of applications in for the coming few months. Our members are a great team with many long term volunteers and many who have just started. Everybody, whether experienced with a paintbrush or not, has something to add to the group. So far this year we have been to jobs on the north and south of the city. Both jobs involved some cleaning for the inhabitants and we hope to go back in the future to do some much needed decoration. There is always a wide variety in the projects that we take on within Dublin and once or twice a year we take on larger projects outside of the city usually in conjunction with another charity. We also enjoy the occasional night out with each other so it's not all work.

If anyone would like to join our group we can be contacted via email at [dlg@dublinlocalgroup.org](mailto:dlg@dublinlocalgroup.org). New members are always very welcome and no skills are necessary as long as you have enthusiasm and a willingness to join in.



# VSI FEES

## IVP

	Projects Abroad	Irish Projects
Unwaged:	€ 80.00	€ 50.00
Students:	€ 90.00	€ 60.00
Wage Earners:	€ 125.00	€ 70.00
Extra project fee:	€ 40.00	€ 40.00

Includes VSI membership fee for 1 year.

## Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East, North Africa

VSI Membership - €14/€27 (un/waged) + Programme Fee to VSI: €140.00

## Long Term Volunteering:

SCI Long Term Volunteering Fees: VSI Membership -€14/€27.  
Project Fee: €50.00

EVS VSI Membership - €14/€27

## Membership fee

Wage Earners €27.00 Unwaged €14.00

VSI is a membership organisation and depends on the support of members and volunteers to carry out its yearly programme of activities. If you would like to become a member, complete the membership form on the VSI website.



Contact the Kimmage Development Studies Centre for more information on full time and part time options in the following programmes:

- MA / Post Graduate Diploma in Development Studies
- BA Degree in Development Studies
- Understanding Development' evening course

Study areas include: Political Economy of Development; Sociology of Development; Planning for Development; Gender; Environment and Development; Cultural Anthropology; Adult Education; Leadership in Groups; Sustainable Livelihoods; Human Rights; Emergency Relief; Research Methods; Development Policy Analysis

MA/PG/BA are accredited by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council of Ireland ([www.hetac.ie](http://www.hetac.ie)) and lead to an internationally recognised qualification.

For a Course Prospectus and further information contact:

The Kimmage Development Studies Centre, Kimmage Manor,  
Whitehall Road, Dublin 12

Telephone: 01 4064386 / 4064380 Fax: 01 4064388

E-mail: [info@kimmagedsc.ie](mailto:info@kimmagedsc.ie) Web: [www.kimmagedsc.ie](http://www.kimmagedsc.ie)



**Servas Open doors around the world**

**Why not stay with people in their homes for a couple of days on your way to or from your project?**

**With Servas you can do it!**

Servas was set up to promote peace by allowing people to meet in their own environment. It is a worldwide network of about 16,000 hosts and travellers providing hospitality and friendship.

**For further information contact (s.a.e.):**

William Fine

57 Liberty Court

Blackpitts

Dublin 8

Tel: 01 454 0608

Email: [Ireland@servas.org](mailto:Ireland@servas.org)

web: [www.servas.org](http://www.servas.org)



## Looking for work?

Volunteering for Camphill may be the answer! Camphill offers life-changing work and experience living in rural or urban communities around Ireland. Camphill supports people with a range of intellectual disabilities in residential communities, where each person contributes according to their abilities.

## Who can join?

Opportunities exist for students or qualified graduates to get valuable experience in a range of disciplines including-

- Social Work and Caring
- Physio, Music and other therapies
- Farming and Horticulture
- Sustainability and Environment – Renewable energy
- Administration and Governance
- Construction - Building Maintenance and Design
- Crafts and Domestic Science

Please look at the 'volunteer in Camphill' link on [www.camphill.ie](http://www.camphill.ie) for more information

Let Dtalk support your work in International Development... with more than 40 practical, informative, and fascinating training topics!



Dtalk is a training and learning programme, supported by Irish Aid, for development workers from the civil society sector active in international development. This includes Irish NGOs and missionary organisations. The programme is managed by a consortium of organisations led by the Kimmage Development Studies Centre (KDSC), Kimmage Manor, Dublin. The other members of the consortium are the International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC- UK), MDF Training and Consultancy (MDF- The Netherlands) and the Danish Association for International Cooperation (MS-TCDC Tanzania).

Supported by:

The Dtalk approach is one of which is characterised by: critical thinking and understanding of development; practical skills-based training and an integrated understanding of individual, organisational and sectoral learning. Course outlines, applications forms and calendar is available at [www.dtalk.ie](http://www.dtalk.ie)



**For Further Information Contact:**

**Website: <http://www.dtalk.ie>**

Áine Costigan, Programme Coordinator,  
Telephone: + 353 (0) (0)1 406 4424,  
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# VSI 2010 Photo Competition



Take lots of photos on your volunteering project and enter them in to our competition!

Fantastic prizes include International Volunteer Projects, vouchers, books, t-shirts and lots more!

All the best photos will be used in our publicity materials e.g. the VSI website, posters, fliers and the VSI book.

Everyone who participates in a volunteer project in any VSI programme during 2010 and who applies through VSI, can take part in the competition, this includes those projects taking place in Ireland.

***The photographs must clearly show some aspect of volunteering with VSI - volunteer work or learning and any activities that the volunteer takes part in during the project.***

- The closing date is the 15th October 2010 (volunteers taking part in projects after this date will be able to enter the 2011 competition).
- The VSI National Committee will decide the winning photos.
- The winners will be contacted directly.
- The winners will be announced and prizes presented at the VSI 2010 AGM. The results will be published on the VSI website and in the VSI bulletin.

Further info and how to apply available from [www.vsi.ie](http://www.vsi.ie) or from the VSI office. Terms and Conditions apply, please see the VSI website or contact the office.