

THE YEAR IN VSI 2015



The Year in VSI

2015 was an eventful year for VSI. Along with the many volunteer projects and programmes in Ireland and abroad, we decided to temporarily close the VSI Teenage Programme. The decision was a difficult one for VSI but the underlying financial problems of the whole organisation meant that we could not run a safe and sustainable programme for the young people taking part. We are currently seeking funding for a Strategic Review and developing a Strategic Plan which will outline how we work with young people with less opportunities in the future.

National Committee

Ken Jennings, Michele Lam, Kate O Carroll, Kevin Sullivan, Ben Murray were appointed as the VSI National Committee in December 2014. Kate resigned in January and Michelle in March. The year has been a difficult one for VSI and the National Committee due to our fragile financial situation.

Staff

- Tom Ryder (VSI Co-ordinator)
- Helen Walmsley (IVP Development Officer)
- Grace Walsh (Teenage Programme Co-ordinator until July 2015)
- Hilary Troy, (Office Administrator)
- Masha Buldakova (IVP Placement Officer)
- Emmet Griffin (Projects Officer)
- Francesca Tantussi (Marketing and Research Officer from November helped to keep the many VSI programmes and activities moving along in 2015)

The National Committee would like to express gratitude to the staff team who over the year have approached their work in a professional and enthusiastic manner.

THANKS: *The National Committee would like to thank*

- All our volunteers, activists and committee members
- Sponsoring and Co-operating organisations
- Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (via National Lottery)
- Youth In Action Programme and Erasmus + Programme via Leargas
- FAS
- Howlin and O'Rourke –auditors
- HSE
- SCI Branches and the SCI International Secretariat.
- Miriam Amador for her help with marketing

- VSI is a member of the **National Youth Council of Ireland**
- VSI is a member **of Dochas**, the network of NGO's in Development
- VSI is a signatory to the **Dochas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages**
- VSI is a signatory to the **Volunteering Options Code of Good Practice for Sending Organisations**



International Volunteer Projects Programme

Projects in Ireland: 19 Projects organised in Ireland – 4 in Killarney National park, 2 in Glebe House, 5 in Shine, 4 in Cuisle, 2 in Callan, one with the Workhouse project and 1 with Abhainn na Ri festival, and 1 in Grangebeg and Ballybay Camphill Community. Over 100 volunteers took part in the projects from 19 different countries. Much work was done on interviewing volunteers and referees as part of our Child Protection Programme. 15 volunteers took part in Coordinator Training in May and 12 helped out with various projects throughout the summer.

Volunteers abroad: VSI received 220 applications for projects abroad and volunteers joined projects in South Africa, Kenya, Indonesia, Palestine and many EU and neighbouring countries. Volunteers also took part in Preparation and Evaluation Workshops in Dublin.

Long Term Volunteering/European Voluntary Service

VSI placed 8 EVS volunteers in Albania, Belgium, Iceland, France, Slovenia and Slovakia during 2015. In addition 3 volunteers in Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova finished their service in October.

VSI are currently hosting 2 EVS volunteers Masha from Russia as Placement Officer and Francesca from Italy assisting with marketing and research. VSI also support 2 EVS volunteers in Cloughjordan ECO Farm, in Co. Tipperary.

VSI sent 1 LTV to an asylum seeker centre project in Switzerland and has assisted Glebe House in Strangford in recruiting several volunteers including 2 long term volunteers from Russia and Kazakhstan.

Dublin Local Group

The DLG continued their work of painting and decorating for some of the most vulnerable people in Dublin city. The jobs are referred by social workers and the volunteers carry out the projects on Saturdays.

Marketing

VSI attended 16 Volunteers Fairs in many colleges and universities throughout Ireland during 2015. We were able to meet over 700 people and they have received various volunteering updates during the year. The website, Facebook and Twitter have been the mainstay of our marketing during the year.

Training and Seminars

- Two VSI volunteers joined the SCI Germany **Picture Perfect seminar** in November. The seminar looked at how SCI could assist with breaking dangerous stereotypes based on gender & sexuality.
- One volunteer joined the SCI Sweden training **'Lets Inherit the Earth** in March.
- 4 volunteers joined the SCI **International Training of Trainers** in Antwerp in June.
- 3 volunteers from the Teenage Programme joined the SCI Italy **Leader Training Seminar** in June in Rome.
- One volunteer joined the SCI Austria led **Picturing the Global South** seminar in November.
- Our EVS Volunteer Masha joined the SCI Training **'Memory beyond Rhetoric Campaign'** in Italy in May and the follow up seminar in Verdun, France in November.
- One volunteer joined the SCI Germany **Climate for Peace Training** in September.
- 15 volunteers took part in the VSI **Coordinator Training** held in Dublin in May. Many of them then helped to coordinate VSI projects north and south.
- 15 volunteers took part in a **Members weekend** in February in Wicklow which included discussions, a visit to Glencree, hill walking and sightseeing.
- 40 volunteers took part in the IVP **Preparation and Evaluation** Workshops in Dublin.
- 3 of the staff team joined the Leargas **Eurodesk National Event** in September in Dublin.

Participate, Learn, Grow'

In September VSI hosted a seminar titled '**Participate, Learn, Grow'**, with the SCI Albania -PVN and Tandem, a partner organisation from Greece and Spina Bifida Ireland. The staff team took part in the seminar as well as a number of VSI volunteers/active members. We explored the inclusion of young people with disabilities through volunteering. We discussed potential future projects on participation, inclusion, growth, learning and also the integration of disabled and non-disabled young people, we envisaged projects where both target groups will participate learn and grow together

VSI 50 Years a Growing -Digital History:

A small team has been working on developing a Digital History of VSI's 50 years. They have met several times over the year and several articles have been published on the VSI website. They are continuing their work into 2016.

VSI Other Events

- 25 VSI people gathered to meet with Joanna Leser, daughter of the founders of VSI, in September when she visited Dublin and Glencree.
- 45 people gathered in Galway for a 50 years Food and Thought evening in November with a focus on Nepal.
- 20 people who were active in Development Education in VSI met for dinner in Dublin in November.